

**Boris
SAPOZHNIKOV**

**THE
CHINA THEATRE
IN
WORLD WAR II
1939-1945**



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Б. Г. Сапожников

КИТАПСКИЙ ФРОНТ ВО ВТОРОМ МИРОВОМ ВОЙНЕ.
1939—1945

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Preface

Some historical events exert a most profound influence on the fortunes of humankind, on the course of the world's development. One such event was World War II, whose 40th anniversary is celebrated by progressives in all countries.

World War II, prepared and started by fascist Germany and Italy and militarist Japan, by imperialism's most reactionary and aggressive forces, has no equal in scale and ferocity, casualties and destruction. Four-fifths of the world population had been drawn into its vortex. It was the bloodiest and the most destructive of all wars. It had cost 50 million lives, out of which 20 million Soviet. It was the gravest crime ever committed by the forces of reaction and aggression, and evokes anger and indignation among all peaceloving people to this day.

World War II had raged for six long years, from 1939 to 1945. The hostilities unfolded in the territory of forty European, Asian and African countries, across vast continental and maritime theatres of war operations; armies many millions strong, equipped with large quantities of weaponry, were locked in fierce battle.

Nazi Germany and militarist Japan sought to pave the way to world supremacy by violence and force of arms. Their chief political aim was to destroy the Soviet Union, but they also aimed at stripping most countries of their freedom and independence. Barbarity and obscurantism would then have enveloped mankind for many many years.

The road to victory had been long and arduous—through savage battles, dreadful ordeals, severe privations. It took colossal exertions and tremendous resources for the nations of the anti-

Hitler coalition, for the men and women of the Resistance to frustrate the insane schemes of the aggressor countries.

In the confrontation of two powerful coalitions, the Soviet Union stood in the van of the struggle against fascism. The Soviet people and their armed forces bore the main burden of the war against the Hitlerite camp. The Soviet-German front was the chief theatre of war operations where the future of the Soviet people, and indeed of the entire world, hung in the balance. It was the Soviet Union that blocked the fascist aggressors' path to world supremacy, that halted their expansionist drive into other countries and continents. The Soviet Union achieved what no Western country managed to achieve: in bitter single combat it destroyed the bulk of the enemy's troops and weaponry. It carried the fight against the invaders to its finish, and rendered immediate aid to the peoples of European and Asian countries in expelling German and Japanese invasion forces from their soil.

The regular troops and partisan armies of Yugoslavia, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, the patriots of Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, and Hungary, and the men and women of the Resistance and the antifascist underground fought against the Nazi invaders with selfless dedication. Communists, true sons of their peoples and faithful internationalists, stood in the front ranks of the liberation movement. A big contribution to the victory was made by the peoples and armies of the USA, Britain, France, China, and the other countries of the anti-Hitler coalition.

German fascism's crushing defeat and thereupon also the defeat of Japanese militarism had a most profound effect on the further course of world history. Favourable conditions appeared for the working people's struggle for social and national liberation. The positions of the progressive, democratic, peace-loving forces grew stronger. The influence of communist and workers' parties increased. The socialist world system emerged and made good headway. The disintegration of the imperialist colonial system gathered momentum and culminated in its collapse.

The lessons of World War II are of everlasting significance. As noted in the CPSU Central Committee's resolution on the 40th anniversary of the victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945, the main lesson is that war must

be combated before it ever begins. Past experience shows that to safeguard peace coordinated and dynamic action by all peace-loving forces is called for against imperialism's recklessly aggressive policy. The nations must heighten their vigilance, must cherish and multiply the gains of socialism.

Although four decades have passed since World War II, the interest in its history runs as high as ever, and not only among people of the elder generation that took part in, and witnessed, the wartime events. Young people, too, want to know the truth about the war. They are aware that the present was conceived in the past and is the groundwork of the future.

It is only to be regretted that the vast World War II literature includes an all too large number of books in which the facts are deliberately perverted. Falsifiers smuggle in false interpretations to whitewash imperialism, which bears the main responsibility for the outbreak of the war. Reactionary historians go out of their way to draw a veil of oblivion over the decisive battles fought on the Soviet-German front and, on the other hand, to exaggerate the contribution of other war theatres.

A long-drawn-out discussion has been underway in Western countries and Japan for nefarious purposes over the Soviet contribution to the victory over Japan. US President Harry Truman had one day told US historians that Russians made no contribution to speak of to the war against Japan.¹ And to this day, some bourgeois writers fall back on this version.

But history deals pitilessly with falsifiers. The outcome of the momentous battles fought on the Soviet-German front, which brought about the change of fortunes in World War II, had also exerted an immediate influence on the plans and actions of the combatants in the Pacific Theatre, and, among other things, forced the Japanese command to review its strategy and go on the defensive. Even before joining the war against Japan, the Soviet Union had between 32 and 59 divisions on its border with Manchuria, thus pinning down the entire Kwantung Army and thereby facilitating Chinese and US operations against Japan.²

The Soviet Union's joining the war against militarist Japan made a determining impact on the course and outcome of World War II in the Far East, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific. Once Japan was crushed, the China Theatre ceased to exist. The na-

tional liberation war of the Chinese people against the Japanese invaders was over. Thanks to the aid of the Soviet Union, China achieved in a short space of time what it had failed to achieve in the preceding eight long years of war against the Japanese aggressors.

Chinese spokesmen were unsparing in their praise of the historic and decisive contribution of the Soviet people and the Soviet Armed Forces to the rout of the Japanese militarists. Zhu De (Chu Teh), Commander of the 8th Route Army, said: "The Soviet Army entered Manchuria, routed and destroyed the Kwantung Army, that bulwark of Japanese militarism, and thereby forced Japanese imperialism to surrender."³ The *Guang-ming ribao* wrote: "When the Soviet Union sent its army into the field, the Japanese Kwantung Army was routed to the last man and the Japanese invaders' dream of turning Manchuria into a bulwark for their final effort, was dashed. No other recourse but unconditional surrender was left to them. This is convincing evidence that nothing but the Soviet Union's joining the war made Japan surrender unconditionally, that the actions of the Soviet Army, the liberation of the Northeastern Provinces and Korea, significantly shortened the duration of the Allies' war against Japan."⁴

The Allies (USA and Britain), indeed, had estimated in August 1943 that Japan would not be knocked out before 1947 or 1948. Later, it is true, they agreed to crush Japan in twelve months after Germany's defeat. High-ranking Americans speculated that if Russia was an ally in the war against Japan, it could be "terminated in less time and at less expense in life and resources than if the reverse were the case. Should the war in the Pacific have to be carried on with an unfriendly or a negative attitude on the part of Russia, the difficulties will be immeasurably increased and operations might become abortive."⁵

In January 1945 the Joint Chiefs of Staff informed President Roosevelt that Russia's early entry into the war was necessary to provide maximum assistance to US Pacific operations.⁶ Harry Truman, too, stressed that the US was eager for the Russians to get into the war with Japan.⁷ US and British leaders were aware, and admitted publicly, that if the Soviet Union were to hold back and not join the war against Japan, it would take an army of 7 million to invade the Japanese Islands and that then

the war against Japan would drag out for another eighteen months.⁸

The above proves that the Soviet Union's entry into the war in the Far East had been manifestly necessary. The Soviet Union thereby ensured the security of its Far Eastern borders, lived up to its pledge to the Allies, brought nearer the end of World War II, and assisted the Asian peoples to liberate themselves.

The reader is hereby offered a book about the role and place of the China Theatre in the progress and outcome of World War II. Its purpose is to show how the role of the China Theatre changed in the light of the gradually deteriorating general situation of the fascist aggressors and the changes that occurred in Japan's occupation policy owing to its economic, political, and military difficulties caused by the long war in the Pacific. The Japanese government and high command applied increasing efforts to incline the Chinese government to a separate peace. Much attention in the book is devoted to the negative effects on the war situation in China of the passive defence strategy of the Guomindang (Kuomintang) armies, the guerillas in the rear of the Japanese troops, and the absence of mutual understanding and cooperation between the Guomindang armies and units of the Communist-led 8th Route and New 4th armies that formally comprised the United National Anti-Japanese Front.

Your author also sought to show the egoistic, carefully camouflaged policy of the US leadership, notably of a segment of the US military command, directed to backing the anticommunist activity of Chiang Kaishek and his clique. Towards the end of the war, indeed, this policy led to the overt involvement of US armed forces in setting the stage for civil war against the national liberation forces of the Chinese people. The China Theatre played a specific role in World War II. True, the main theatre was in Europe, where the armies of the combatant coalitions were concentrated and the chief strategic war aims were being resolved. The Asiatic Theatre, despite its vast area, was subordinate to the European from the outset.

The China Theatre, too, in the context of the Asiatic, was no more than secondary to, say, the Pacific Theatre, in which Japan exerted its main effort.

It will be recalled that back in the early 1930s the Japanese militarists overran a considerable part of Northeast China in a

bid to use it as a bridgehead for aggression against the Soviet Union. By so doing Japan had created a dangerous world war flashpoint in the Far East. Still, the armed struggle that got underway in China against the Japanese invaders then must not be regarded as the beginning of World War II because of its limited scale and essentially local significance. The special thing about the China Theatre is that it took shape in the course of the national liberation war fought by the Chinese people against Japanese imperialism (1937-1945), which later—from 1939 on—became part of World War II.

Still, scrutiny of the role and place of the China Theatre yields a more complete general picture of World War II and of the contribution made by the Soviet Union and its Armed Forces to the crushing defeat of militarist Japan. It yields a better idea of the Chinese people's resistance to the Japanese invaders, and of the policy of the United States vis-à-vis China and Japan. Furthermore, it demonstrates that countries with different social systems, and different social forces within one country such as China, can cooperate fruitfully in resisting aggression. The operations in the China Theatre will help us understand the postwar developments in Asia.

In short, the lessons of World War II must never be forgotten.

This book, *The China Theatre in World War II*, was first published (in Russian) by Nauka Publishers of Moscow in 1971. In the interim, capital monographs and a large number of magazine articles on the history of World War II have appeared in the Soviet Union and abroad. And, quite naturally, they touch—in greater or less detail—on the role and place of the Sino-Japanese war of 1937-1945 in the history of World War II.

Your author has been witness to many of the events of the 1930s and 40s. Indeed, he took part in some of the acute events on the side of the peoples of China, Korea, Mongolia, and others, against colonialism and imperialism. This has been of great help to him in producing a carefully documented history of the China war, and in revealing and demonstrating the imperialist and colonialist aims of Japan, the USA, Britain and other imperialist powers in relation to China in contemporary times.

The author feels that it is useful to refer to some latest publications on the anti-Japanese national liberation struggle of the Chinese people and the place of the China Theatre in World War II—both those that appeared in China and those that appeared in other combatant countries—the USA, Britain, Germany and, notably, Japan.

Some monographs on contemporary Chinese history were published in the Soviet Union. Until the end of the 50s, while the Chinese leaders followed a policy of close friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union and other countries of the socialist world system, Soviet Sinologists and historians had access to Chinese sources published during the anti-Japanese war and also after the victory of the people's revolution and the establishment of the People's Republic of China. Access to Chinese archives and, among others, to the materials of the History Division of the Communist Party of China in Peking, like the personal contacts between Soviet and Chinese scholars, enriched their documentary arsenal. Among the capital works published in the Soviet Union (in Russian) are the twelve-volume *History of the Second World War. 1939-1945* (Voenizdat, Moscow, 1973-1982); M. S. Kapitsa, *Soviet-Chinese Relations* (Moscow, 1958); *Essays on the History of China in Current Times* (Moscow, 1959); V. B. Vorontsov, *US Policy in the Pacific* (Moscow, 1967); *The Current History of China. 1917-1970* (Moscow, 1972); *China's History From Antiquity to Our Times* (Moscow, 1974); O. Borisov, *The Soviet Union and the Manchurian Revolutionary Base. 1945-1949* (Moscow, 1977); *The Comintern and the East* (Moscow, 1969); *The Comintern and the East. A Critique of the Criticism. Against Falsifiers of the Leninist Strategy and Tactics in the National Liberation Movement* (Moscow, 1978); *International Relations in the Far East, Vol. 2, 1917-1945* (Mysl Publishers, Moscow, 1973); S. L. Tikhvinsky, *Chinese History and the Present* (Nauka Publishers, Moscow, 1976); A. M. Dubinsky, *Soviet-Chinese Relations at the Time of the Anti-Japanese War. 1937-1945* (Nauka Publishers, Moscow, 1980).

The following books, too, made a visible contribution to the general and war history of China: G. V. Yefimov and A. M. Dubinsky, *International Relations in the Far East. 1917-1945* (Nauka Publishers, Moscow, 1973); M. I. Sladkovsky, *China*

and Japan (Nauka Publishers, Moscow, 1971); *World History*, Vol. 10, 1939-1945 (Mysl Publishers, Moscow, 1965); *The Current History of China. 1918-1949* (Nauka Publishers, Moscow, 1984).

A most valuable contribution was made by the memoirs of Soviet military advisers in China during the anti-Japanese war, such as *Mission in China. Notes of a Military Adviser* by Marshal of the Soviet Union V. I. Chuikov (Moscow, 1981); *On Unfamiliar Roads (Notes of a Military Adviser in China)* by General A. J. Kalyagin (2nd edition, Moscow, 1979); *Notes of a Military Adviser in China* by General A. I. Cherepanov (2nd edition, Moscow, 1976), *Special Area of China. 1942-1945* by P. P. Vladimirov (Moscow, 1973), and so on.

As for Chinese-language literature, it is represented by two groups—publications put out in Yan'an and some of the bigger border regions where units of the 8th Route and New 4th armies with their political departments, and large guerilla detachments, were deployed. These publications were put out in small printings and on low-quality paper. They are valuable because they contain information about the life of the local people, their struggle against the enemy, and the productive activity of units and sub-units of the People's Liberation Army, throughout the period of the anti-Japanese war (1937-1945). The second group consists of publications put out after the victory of the people's revolution and the establishment of the People's Republic of China. This makes a fairly long list of works, some collective, some written by one author, which rely on archives and the remembrances of veterans of the national anti-Japanese war of liberation of 1937-1945 to describe the military and political developments in China's history of that period. Publications that appeared before the end of the 1950s, yielded much material expanding the range of studies of current history and, in particular, of the war history of China. But towards the end of the 1950s there began to appear unobjective studies of the general and military history of the Chinese people.

Not only Soviet Communists, but also Communists and democratic forces of other countries had helped the Communist Party of China and the People's Liberation Army. Of special importance was the fact that a group of Japanese Communists had come to Yan'an with Sandzo Nosaka (Okano Susumu) at their

head, who helped organise and carry on political propaganda in Japanese garrisons and among Japanese field troops, explaining to the soldiers of the imperial army the criminal essence and aims of Japan's imperialist aggression against China.

Nosaka published pamphlets, booklets, and leaflets in Japanese (later translated into Chinese) with detailed and truthful assessment of the international situation, the situation in Japan and China, and in the rest of Asia. He stressed the international impact of the Chinese people's struggle against the Japanese aggression, described the historic role for the world of the Soviet Union's struggle against the Nazi Wehrmacht, and predicted the inevitable and natural victory that the antifascist coalition would score against fascism and militarism. The pamphlet he published when Japan started its war against the United States and Britain in the Pacific and Southeast Asia was exceptionally rich in content. It addressed the Japanese people, warning them that the aggressive acts of the Japanese imperialists against the USA, Britain and China, and the Japanese preparations for an attack on the Soviet Union, would inescapably lead to a defeat of a magnitude that Japan had never experienced before.

On each anniversary of the Sino-Japanese war Nosaka published an address to the Japanese people (*Nippon kokumin ni atau*), summing up the events of the preceding year, showing that Japan's strategic situation had deteriorated, causing an enormous loss of life, and, chiefly, demonstrating that the Asian nations condemned the aggressive colonialist policy of the Japanese rulers, militarists, and monopoly concerns.

On July 7, 1943, Nosaka published a pamphlet in Japanese on the 6th anniversary of the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war, demonstrating in clear and deeply emotional terms that Japan was facing certain defeat, a senseless loss of life, and more privation. The pamphlet ended with a call to oust the militarists and the war government. "Let us set up a people's government," it said, "and build a peaceful and free Japan. Long live the joint struggle of the peoples against imperialism and war! Long live the worldwide antifascist struggle against the strategy of imperialist war and colonial slavery." These slogans struck a response among the Japanese working people. Despite the Japanese soldiers' isolation from the outside world and the risk to their lives for reading "enemy leaflets", Nosaka's appeal reached the

men of the Japanese occupation army in China, and set them thinking. Doubly so, because by then the US and British forces were on the counter-offensive, subjecting the Japanese armed forces to heavy pressure, and compelling them to go on the defensive.

Japanese antifascists in the army and in Japan flouted the brutality of the police and gendarmerie and openly expressed dissatisfaction over the aggressive policy of Japan's rulers and militarists. And what is most astonishing, some of the documentary literature that appeared in Japan during the Sino-Japanese war is still a most valuable source of truthful material. Take Kafuo Matsuhara's book, *Saikin kokugai ho: ojobi gaiko sirjo* (Contemporary International Law and Diplomatic Documents), put out in Tokyo in 1942, and the series of books published under the auspices of the Japanese Foreign Ministry, *Gen-dai nippon gaiko sirjo* (Material on Japan's Current Foreign Policy), Nos. 4-31, Tokyo, 1942-1944.

Still the many histories of the Sino-Japanese war published in Japan are tendentious. Japan's present-day bourgeois historians have made it their purpose to conceal from the rising generations who had been too young to have taken part in, or were born after, the war, the colonial piracy in China and Southeast Asia, as well as the many events of World War II that ended in abject defeat for the Japanese militarists. At best, these facts are doctored and presented in a perverse, distorted light. Conservative Japanese historians endeavour to absolve the Japanese rulers and militarists, who were the chief culprits of the war and of the suffering and privation it brought to the Japanese and Chinese peoples, of any blame for the war, and to shift it to the door of the Soviet Union and China's Communists and internationalists. The slogans that were circulated at the time of World War II, such as "Fight White Imperialism" which declared the USA and Britain the chief "white imperialists", and "Asia for Asiatics", are never recalled or mentioned any more lest they affect Japan's relations with those two countries or cast doubt on the Japanese-American military and political alliance. For Japanese bourgeois historians the main thing is to give the events of World War II an anti-Soviet twist and to back up the groundless demands of Japan's reactionary imperialist elements for revision of the results of World War II and "return of the

northern territories", that is, the historically Russian Kurile Islands and Southern Sakhalin, which had been used by Japanese imperialists to block free access to the Pacific for Russia and, later, the Soviet Union.

Some Japanese historians tend to justify the aggressive policies of Japan's rulers and militarists in relation to China, and endeavour to prove that "the war fought by the imperial armed forces in China" had been "a war of liberation from the colonialist policy of the USA, Britain, and the Soviet Union in relation to China". In their memoirs, Japanese statesmen go to great pains to show that Japan's alliance with Germany and Italy, the establishment of puppet regimes like Wang Jingwei's in China and Dewang's in Inner Mongolia, and similar ones in the Southeast Asian countries, "had been forced measures countering the threat of Anglo-American hegemonism" and, of course, "the threat of communism spreading on the Asian continent".

The English-language and German literature reflects the colonialist motivations of the US and British leaders. In general, China's World War II history is dealt with superficially, in passing. The respective authors are interested in nothing but the Chinese leaders' position and their evaluation of the foreign policy of the imperialist USA, Britain, France, Germany, and so on. In substance, nothing has been produced about the people of China, about their hopes and aspirations, their struggle against Japanese militarism, the role of the Communist Party of China, and the leadership it exercised in the anti-Japanese struggle.

Very little space is devoted to the Sino-Japanese war of 1937-1945 in the multi-volume histories of World War II put out in the USA, Britain, France, the FRG, Italy and other countries as the reader will see if he looks at the Bibliographical References on pp. 244-256.

BORIS SAPOZHNIKOV

Chapter 1

How Japan Prepared For and Started Its War Against China

Following the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia (in 1917), the imperialist powers put aside their contradictions for a while and concentrated their resources—diplomatic as well as military—on collectively destroying the young Soviet Republic.

The USA, Japan and China in the 1920s and 30s

The leading statesmen of Japan, the United States and Britain went out of their way to enlist the militarist elements in China in an anti-Soviet alliance. But though the Japanese rulers did conclude an anti-Soviet treaty (on the Chinese militarists' participation in the intervention in the Soviet Far East and Siberia) in March 1918, the working people in China and the democratically-minded Chinese intelligentsia gave their support and affection to Soviet Russia, and many of them joined in the struggle the Soviet people fought in the Far East against the interventionists.

By their collective intervention in the Soviet Far East, the US, Japanese and British imperialists intended to pave the way for a subsequent conquest of China, whose territory they intended to divide among themselves. But there were those in Japan who did not want to share China with anyone, least of all the USA, which, however, had already by then seized fairly solid positions, especially in the Yangzi Valley.

The Japanese-American rivalry over China has its history. Many chapters of that history are associated with events relating to the preparation for, and the outbreak of, World War II (1939-1945).

Lenin's following words (spoken in 1920) on international relations in the Far East and the Pacific were truly prophetic:

"A most stubborn struggle has been going on for many decades between Japan and America over the Pacific Ocean and the mastery of its shores, and the entire diplomatic, economic and trade history of the Pacific Ocean and its shores is full of quite definite indications that the struggle is developing and making war between America and Japan inevitable."¹

As concerned the shores of the Pacific, the imperialists of the United States and those of Japan were both above all desirous of gaining mastery of China, a large country with a large population and possessing large deposits of strategic raw materials. The imperialist scramble for spheres of influence in China grew increasingly intense owing to the economic crisis of 1929-1933. The USA and Japan were both nursing plans of securing colonial mastery of China. One of these plans envisaged China's subordination through military and financial aid to the Chiang Kaishek regime against the Communist Party of China, which was gaining ever more solid political positions in the country, and the other envisaged armed invasion and seizure of China's key provinces with the subsequent establishment there of a puppet regime.

On the face of it, the approaches of the Japanese and American governments to these two versions of colonialisng China differed. The Japanese leaders favoured the second approach and were priming for an invasion of China. In so doing, they had no intention of letting any other imperialist power, notably the USA, participate in the colonisation of China, though to disguise their aggressive aim they did declare that they would not impinge on the positions already held in China by their capitalistic rivals. At the same time, official Tokyo gave its Western imperialist rivals and the USA reason to count on Japan playing the vanguard role in the struggle against the Comintern and the USSR, the world's first socialist country.

Japan's role of imperialism's vanguard in an armed struggle against the Soviet Union in the Far East suited the imperialist states as much as the same role played by Hitler Germany in Europe. And they built their policy of aid and assistance to militarist Japan and Nazi Germany on this principle, thus facilitat-

ing the emergence of two anti-Soviet flashpoints—in Europe and the Far East—by the mid-30s.

At the same time, the US leaders promoted and defended the “open door” principle in China. Here they counted on US economic and financial superiority over the other countries, hoping it would help the USA seize top place in exploiting the manpower and sources of raw materials in China and other Asian states. This bid for victory in the competitive struggle, however, did not mean total renunciation of force in colonising Asian countries, notably China. It simply meant that a section of US leaders feared the option of armed force would discredit the “open door” doctrine, for more than once Japanese rulers had shut the door to Asian countries before the noses of US colonialists. This had happened in the latter half of the 19th and early half of the 20th century, when the USA tried to expand and consolidate its colonial positions in China.

After 1917, the inter-imperialist contradictions were relegated to the background. The imperialists concentrated on war and intervention against Soviet Russia and on suppressing the national liberation and anticolonialist movement that arose, in particular, in China and other Asian countries under the impact of the Revolution accomplished by the proletariat in Russia.

The United States, Japan, Britain, France and the Chinese militarist clique took part in an intervention in the Soviet Far East in 1918-1922. Their common aim was to block the spread of revolution to the East, to destroy the Soviet state, and to re-establish capitalism in the Soviet Far East and Siberia, thus opening the door to their colonial exploitation by the Entente countries and the United States.

The Japanese, however, wanted to “open the door” to the Far Eastern regions of Russia and to Siberia only for themselves, while giving the other participants in the intervention—the USA, Britain and France—only so much access as would leave no doubt about Japanese predominance in all spheres: the administrative, economic, commercial, and ideological. In the context of the collective imperialist intervention, special emphasis was laid on blocking the penetration into China of the ideology of proletarian solidarity with revolutionary Russia, and of the ideas of socialism and communism. As the intervention of the imperialist states progressed, its organisers soon saw that the Chinese

working people had warm feelings for the revolutionary working class and the working peasantry of Russia and that, indeed, many thousands of Chinese were fighting with arms in hand for Soviet power in the Far East of Russia and in Siberia, and that many had enlisted in the Red Army and were fighting with dedication in the south of the Ukraine, and on the northern front in the region of Archangel.

The Anglo-American intervention troops, the Japanese occupation force, and the Russian counter-revolutionary detachments fell short of their goal. They failed dismally in their bid to destroy Soviet power and capture the Soviet Far East and Siberia. Their brutal treatment of the civilian population, their undisguised plunder of local wealth, triggered mounting and strong resistance. With the Soviet troops hitting them harder and harder, and with public opinion across the world clamouring for an end to the intervention in the Soviet Far East and for letting the Russian and Chinese people settle their own internal problems, the foreign intervention troops were compelled to withdraw.

But the Japanese troops stayed in Manchuria. With the acquiescence of the Chinese warlords, the Japanese command deployed something like 40,000 officers and men in that region. This force became the “armed shield” of the Japanese monopolies and militarists who dreamed of two interdependent objectives: to seize control of the natural riches of China's Northeastern Provinces (Manchuria), and oust their capitalist rivals—the USA, Britain, Germany, France, etc.—from this region rich in strategic raw materials, and, second, to use the Liaodong Peninsula, the troops they had deployed there and along the South-Manchurian railway, to prepare a staging area and to build up the economic potential of their planned war against the Soviet Union and China.

With this in mind, Japan's monopoly moguls set out to restructure the South-Manchurian railway concern they had established in 1906. The secret papers of the concern, which came to public knowledge after the war, show that its functions in Manchuria ranged from trade and economy, transport and financing, to intelligence and sabotage. Colonel Doihara, chief of Japanese intelligence, used the cover of the SMR way to assemble and operate a spy and sabotage network, and set up a pub-

lishing house and printing works to produce falsified documents and subversive propaganda material.

The activity of Japanese concerns and militarists in Manchuria aroused the suspicions of other capitalist quarters: it was pinpointed by Chinese government leaders, and was also sharply criticised by Communists and progressives from among the Chinese intelligentsia. It is to be noted, however, that the Peking and, later, Nanking leaders, like the leaders in Washington, London, Berlin and Paris, viewed Manchuria as imperialism's prospective outpost to combat the "influence of the Comintern and the Soviet Union". When in 1925 to 1931 the Japanese military command and intelligence formed sabotage groups out of the remnants of defeated whiteguard detachments to instigate disturbances along the Chinese Eastern railway and organised terrorist acts against Chinese Communists and democrats, the anti-Communists in the West took it as a sign that Japan was capable of taking the lead in the struggle against the Soviet Union. And when Japanese troops went on the offensive in September 1931 and occupied all Manchuria, reaching the Soviet border, the West received this act of brute force against the Chinese people as an "advance action" against the USSR. The people of China protested against Japanese colonialism, especially blatant in the country's Northeastern Provinces. But the imperialist states did not condemn Japan for what it had done, though they did set up the League of Nations Commission under Lord Lytton to investigate Japan's seizure of Manchuria, warning in advance that as League members they were "not inclined to charge Japan of aggression" and that a formula should be found for a settlement of the issue that would suit both sides. Already, this posture of Japan's capitalist rivals gave notice of their future concessions to the aggressor in Munich. In any case, it encouraged the Japanese colonialists to extend their front of aggression in China. The Soviet Union was the only country that had through its diplomats in the League of Nations demanded "qualifying Japan's action in Manchuria as an act of aggression".²

I have already pointed out that despite the interimperialist contradictions between the United States and Japan, especially strong in the jockeying for positions in China, there were two distinct lines in the diplomatic practice and government policy of the two countries.

The Japanese line envisaged the expulsion from China of all rivals—the imperialist Western powers, including the United States—by armed force, while demonstrating to them Japan's constant readiness to go to war against the USSR, then the world's only socialist country. In a bid to win the support of the other Asian nations, the Japanese militarists described their mission as one of expelling "white imperialism" from China and other Asiatic states. They brandished the false but intriguing slogan of Asia for Asiatics, which served as a basis for *Hakko ichiu*, the strategic formula of "eight corners under one roof"—with the Emperor of Japan ensconced on a golden throne upon its dome and presiding over a great Asiatic empire.

The US line, on the other hand, provided for the use of economic and financial levers to force the Old World to keep open the doors to China and other countries of Asia. US statesmen regarded China and other Asian countries as a sphere of dominance but, more important still, as a staging area for an anti-Soviet war. They held that their economic and financial aid would feed, encourage and direct the strategic ventures of Japan and other antinational, colonialist forces in Europe and Asia towards a war against the Soviet Union. They planned in so doing to sit it out on their continent and, indeed, profit from the ensuing bloodshed and suffering.

Washington laid its stakes on the anti-Sovietism and anticommunism of the Japanese monopolists and militarists right up to 1933. Thereafter, it faced the dilemma of going to war with Japan over its colonial positions in China or to confine itself to diplomatic moves securing Japanese consent to leave the door to China open for US concerns. US diplomacy and propaganda harped on the "mutual advantages" the monopoly concerns of the two countries would glean from cooperating in the colonial exploitation of China. At the same time, and especially after the Japanese-German Anti-Comintern Pact was concluded on November 25, 1936, Washington made no secret of its willingness to grant Japan certain diplomatic and commercial concessions if it assumed the burden of priming for, and starting, an armed aggression against the Soviet Union.

Tokyo welcomed the concessions promised by its Washington rivals, and sought to obtain the maximum advantage from this US policy. Suffice it to say that commerce between Japan and

the USA in 1936 was 32.7 per cent greater in value than the year before. The percentage of strategic materials in US exports to Japan in 1936 was as high as 68.7. While the Lytton mission (1933-1934) was in China, and especially at the Brussels Conference in November 1937, top US statesmen gave to understand that they did not favour sanctions against Japan. What was more, they saw to it that Tokyo should be informed of the proceedings at the conference and in the League of Nations during the discussion of the Soviet proposal to qualify Japan's action against China as aggressive and to apply appropriate economic and political sanctions. Benefiting from this information, the Japanese leaders, who had beforehand consulted their fascist allies in Berlin, and who were not tied down by any commitments to the League of Nations (from which Japan had withdrawn back in 1933), decided to extend the scale of their aggression in China.

As a result, US encouragement of Japan's aggressive moves in China had by the end of the 1930s already set in motion a Far Eastern Munich-type "appeasement" of the Japanese aggressor, enabling him to prepare intensively for an attack on China and the Soviet Union. In sum, the "appeasement" of Nazism in Europe and of Japanese monarchic fascism in Asia testified to the imperialist powers' designs of expanding and equipping staging areas for a war against the USSR. The territory of China, that great country, was cast in the role of a bridgehead for a Japanese assault on the USSR.

It is in order to show what material and technical aid the USA granted Japan for its war preparations against the Soviet Union, and how it encouraged Japan to expand its aggression in China in 1936 to 1938. US exports to China during that period totalled 138,700,000 dollars, while those to Japan totalled 851,200,000 dollars or six times as much. And one more point: US exports to China consisted chiefly (76.9 per cent) of consumer goods, with drugs and liquor accounting for 32.3 per cent of the total. Meanwhile, nearly two-thirds of US exports to Japan were strategic goods—non-ferrous metals, machine tools and equipment for heavy industry, automobiles, oil and oil products, samples of arms and of military engineering machinery. Typically, part of the US "intellectual export" to Japan consisted of various primitive anti-Soviet and anticommunist productions designed for a mass audience, including nicely illustrated pam-

phlets on how easy it would be for Japan to over-run the USSR with US help and regain what it had lost during the intervention in the Soviet Far East and Siberia in 1918-1922.

Reactionary quarters in the West were elated over the conclusion of the Anti-Comintern Pact between Nazi Germany and militarist Japan in November 1936. This was a move ultimately aimed at war against the USSR (as unambiguously stated in the secret annex to the Pact: "The Soviet Union, where the Comintern has installed itself and conducts its propaganda imperilling peace, has become the centre of communism and its proliferation. Struggle against the USSR, the Comintern and its agents in European and Asian countries is the chief aim of the contracting parties").³

For the US leaders, in any case, the Pact was an indication that their cherished goal was near at hand and that the combined armed forces of Japan, Germany and Italy would soon pounce on the Soviet Union.

Some American statesmen thought, however, that to prod Japan to an armed confrontation with the USSR it would have been enough to allow it to seize Manchuria, a territory with a more than 30-million population and a long border with the Soviet Far East, notably Primorye (Maritime Territory) and the Amur Valley. But it was also perfectly suited as a base for the further spread of aggression in China. It was clear to these American statesmen that Japan would not confine itself to Manchuria, for it had already tried landing troops in Shanghai in 1932 in a bid to extend its aggression to the Yangzi Valley where US interests were considerable. It was also clear that Japan had begun to prepare for the occupation of provinces in North China. Japanese propaganda clamoured for autonomy, that is, separation, of the North China provinces from Central and South China so as to wrest them from the Nanking government's control. The Japanese were clearly unconcerned by the fact that the USA, Britain, France and Germany had considerable interests in that region of China. The American hope that Japan would honour US interests in China in return for US assistance, was clearly in vain. Voices resounded in the USA calling on the administration to block the Japanese aggression in North and Central China.

Tokyo took into account the anti-Japanese sentiment of

influential US statesmen, and decided to demonstrate its readiness to start a war against the Soviet Union and the latter's friend, the Mongolian People's Republic. In 1936, the Japanese Kwantung Army command launched high-pressure construction of a fortified zone along the border between Manchuria and Soviet Primorye. The Chinese population was moved out. Railways and motor-roads were built. Meanwhile, armed incidents were provoked on the border between Manchuria and the Mongolian People's Republic. Their aim was to seize land from the MPR and incorporate it in Inner Mongolia, and also to move across the MPR to the Trans-Siberian Railway, capture a piece of it in the vicinity of Irkutsk and Lake Baikal, cut off Soviet Primorye and the country east of Lake Baikal from the rest of the USSR and, thereupon, occupy these regions.

The tensions in Japanese-Soviet and Japanese-Mongolian relations gave the US leadership reason to assure the opposition that America's relations with Japan should not be strained, because the success of Japanese arms in Manchuria, and the seizure and incorporation in Manchukuo of the province of Rehe (Jehol) followed by the establishment in early March 1934 of an Autonomous Inner Mongolia under Prince Dewang—all this was evidence that Tokyo intended to use the rich local sources of raw materials and the able-bodied population to create a bridgehead for war against the USSR and the MPR. These arguments tended to allay the fears of those who opposed the policy of the reactionary US leadership, and to prove it unwise to complicate relations with the Japanese militarists. The conclusion was that the Japanese deserved help so as to speed up the building of a military staging area in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia, with the Kwantung Army suppressing communist elements in China and going over to resolute armed action against the USSR and the MPR.

The Japanese leaders could not afford to ignore Joseph Stalin's statement to Roy Howard of the Scripps-Howard newspaper empire on March 1, 1936. And Stalin said the following: "If Japan should venture to attack the Mongolian People's Republic in a bid to strip it of independence, we shall have to help the MPR. . . . We shall help the MPR just as we helped it in 1921."⁴ And this statement, we might recall, was followed on March 12, 1936, by the signing of a protocol that committed the USSR and

MPR to rendering each other every possible aid, not short of military, in the event of an attack on either country by a third.

As a result, a heated debate over what course to follow broke out among the Japanese leaders. The fascist-minded elements in the army, with the so-called Young Officers at their head, insisted on carrying out the Otsu Plan, that is, attacking the MPR, without further delay. "If the Soviet Union does come to the aid of Outer Mongolia," they said, "we will deploy the full power of the imperial army against it." The Japanese hawks believed that after knocking out the communist USSR and MPR, the Chinese leaders would be more pliable and Japan would be able to finish off China without much effort. And, by all evidence, Premier Koki Hirota's cabinet was prepared to come to terms with the monarcho-fascist group in the army and consider "a devastating strike against the Soviet Union and the Mongolian People's Republic".

But former Premier Keisuke Okada and several members of his cabinet appealed to the Emperor, warning him of the perils of an armed confrontation with the USSR. So, with the debate over Japan's foreign policy in Asia running high, cabinet kept replacing cabinet: Hirota's resigned on February 2, 1937, and its successor, Hayashi's cabinet, on June 4, 1937. A government headed by Prince Fumimaro Konoye, succeeded it. Speaking to trainees of the Imperial Military Academy on July 13, 1937, Prince Konoye said:

"In the prevailing critical political situation inside the country and on the international scene, we have no other choice but to go over to a decisive offensive in China. But in doing so, we must as far as possible consider the interests of the USA."

The military establishment, the entire army and navy, Konoye maintained, were fully aware that Japan needed a victory over China, where political backing for Japan had already been won among the Chiang Kaishek leadership and in the provinces. Konoye, a rabid anti-Communist and anti-Sovieteer, had close and profitable ties with the ruling element in the United States and avoided complications in Japanese-American relations. He withheld permission for anti-American actions that could cast doubt on his good faith in furthering the common interests of the two countries in preparing an aggression against the Soviet Union.

At a special cabinet meeting on June 21, 1937, Premier Konoye said the government still counted on forestalling a "China Incident" on the following terms: a) that the rulers of China renounce their anti-Japanese policy, b) that China recognise Manchukuo, c) that China join the Anti-Comintern Pact, and d) that China, Manchukuo and Japan cooperate economically. The Premier said further that Japan had no intention of impinging on the interests of other countries in China, but added that in all cases it should be explicitly clear that Japan was master in East Asia, while Europeans were no more than guests. The situation, he went on to say, had been different before the 1922 Washington Conference, but had changed beyond recognition in the 14 or 15 years since then. Konoye said further that those who thought East Asia existed exclusively for the eastern nations and refused to concede any rights and interests, including economic, to Europeans and Americans, were only making the world smaller for themselves. A policy that denied other nations reasonable economic and commercial initiative was unwise, Konoye said.

The concluding part of Konoye's speech contained what was clearly an appeal to his American colleagues—an attempt to draw a red herring across their path, to allay their fears and avoid a deterioration of Japanese-American relations. The speech completely ignored the wish of the Chinese people to have no colonialists on their soil, neither Japanese nor American.

All imperialist governments, in fact, ignored the anticolonialist liberation movement of the mass of the Chinese people. And that could not but cause an armed struggle that lasted for many years. On the other hand, the selfless and fraternal aid of the Soviet people fired the energy and strength of the Chinese in their relentless war against Japanese imperialism.

The Policy of the Guomindang and the CP of China Early in the Sino-Japanese War

During night "exercises" in the late hours of July 7, 1937, a Japanese company stationed in the vicinity of Peking clashed with Chinese soldiers at Marco Polo Bridge (Lugouqiao). The

clash was purely local. But the Japanese had planned it beforehand as a pretext for starting a large-scale Sino-Japanese conflict, for which preparations had been underway for eighteen months. Special agents had primed the 3,000 Japanese civilian residents of Peking for an anti-Chinese putsch. Several detachments had been formed of reservists who were to participate in the armed incident planned for the beginning of July 1937. Following the incident, the Japanese would present an ultimatum to the Chinese government, requiring it to recognise the Hebei-Chahaer Political Council headed by Song Zheyuan, to declare North China an area of special Japanese interests, and to recognise the puppet government of Manchukuo—all of which would enable Japan at a later date to establish undivided supremacy in North China as it had done in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia (where Prince Dewang was put in power).

To get a better idea of what had made Japan's intervention in China possible and successful we must look into the country's socio-economic and political situation.

Despite the existence of Chiang Kaishek's Guomindang government in Nanking, China of the 1920s and early 30s was a semicolonial country which the imperialist USA, Britain, Germany, France, Italy, and other countries had divided into spheres of colonial influence, operating freely with their capital each in its sphere working and shipping out important strategic raw materials and, what was more important, controlling the Chinese market and importing goods which they sold at a high profit. Step by step, the leading imperialist states acquired obedient servants—the compradore bourgeoisie and the feudal landlords. The imperialists stuck at nothing to also buy the allegiance of local warlords (provincial governors-general), providing arms and instructors for the provincial armies. They used the army and police to suppress antiforeign unrest among peasants, workers and patriotically-minded intellectuals. And as if this was not enough, they whetted the warlords' hegemonic appetites, encouraged their ambitions of over-running neighbouring provinces, and thereby aggravated the country's division.

The only party that called for an end to internecine strife, for uniting all forces to repulse imperialism, notably Japanese imperialism, was the Communist Party of China (CPC). The Chinese working people saw it as a force that could lead and orga-

nise the nation and combat colonialists. As its prestige increased, with the national bourgeoisie (especially petty and middle) as well as the mass of the working people recognising and acclaiming it, dread and hatred of the CPC, a wish to destroy it, grew among the compradore bourgeoisie. The pervasive disunity and internecine strife prevented a close-knit counter-revolutionary, anticommunist force from emerging. The Chinese counter-revolutionaries, indeed, relied essentially on the aid of the imperialist states, above all the USA, Britain and France, which had struck deep root in the economy and commerce of the maritime, most densely populated and economically highly developed, provinces in North China, the Yangzi Valley in Central China, and the southern territories close to Hong Kong. But here, too, contradictions obstructed any unification of counter-revolutionary forces. First, in North China (where Britain had considerable interests) the Japanese militarists had managed to enlist powerful agents among the warlords and advocates of North China autonomy, such as Yin Rugeng, Li Shouxin, and others, who were eager to emulate Zhang Zuolin (Chang Tso-lin), that faithful agent of the Japanese imperialists in Manchuria. The Japanese militarists even managed to penetrate the army of Yan Xishan (Yen Hsishan), governor-general of Shanxi Province. The strife grew sharper between the leading Guomindang figures in Shandong Province (General Jin Qiyung, Ji Hongchang, etc.) whose main seaports of Longkou, Yantai, Weihaiwei and Qingdao (Tsingtao) swarmed with Japanese agents. Commerce there was 63.6 per cent in Japanese hands.

In the Yangzi Valley US capital ruled the roost, controlling 53 per cent of China's domestic and foreign trade through its trading companies and banks. US diplomats went out of their way to "bestow the closest favour" on Chiang Kaishek and his chief backers, the four bourgeois compradore families—the Kongs (Kungs), the Songs (Soongs) and the brothers Chen (Chen Lifu and Chen Guofu).

In the south, on the border between China and French Indochina, in Guangdong (Kwantung) and Guangxi (Kwangsi) provinces, and in the provinces closest to the border with Hong Kong, French and British firms were strongly entrenched, profiting especially from the cultivation, processing and export of narcotics.

After the Marco Polo Bridge incident grew from a local into a national conflict and Japanese troops invaded North China, serving notice they would not stop until all China was in their hands, the imperialist powers showed clearly what attitude they would adopt towards the China events, diametrically opposite to the position of the Soviet Union.

The imperialists played a dual game: their mass media, first of all those in the USA and Britain, hurled curses on the Japanese, but nothing was said of the injustice and the criminal nature of the Japanese aggression. Instead, they complained of Japan's infringements on its imperialist rivals' rights and on their common freedom to exploit China.

No leaders of the capitalist states had any sympathy or compassion for the suffering millions of Chinese exposed to the Japanese onslaught which robbed them of hearth and home, and drove them off their fields. Credit is due to the Chinese Communists: in those difficult times they stayed behind the enemy lines, took charge in regions the enemy had not had time to overrun (twelve Japanese divisions had mounted the offensive in separate directions, were isolated from each other and advanced exclusively along railway lines and motor-roads), built bases in mountain, forest or swampy areas out of the enemy's reach, affording shelter to the people and forming guerilla detachments. In localities not seized by the enemy they formed an anti-Japanese peasant militia.

We might note, too, that such capitalist great powers as the United States and Britain did nothing to prevent the split within the Guomindang and the establishment of a pro-Japanese regime in Nanking. This puppet government, which was headed by Wang Jingwei, was outwardly endowed with all the functions of a national government and was recognised by members of the fascist coalition, Germany and Italy, before the end of 1939. Later came its formal recognition by the pro-fascist governments of Spain, Portugal, Romania, Hungary, and the puppet government of Manchukuo.

Prior to the outbreak of the war in the Pacific (in December 1941), with the Soviet people and their armed forces repulsing the Nazi invasion, and with the Japanese Kwantung Army feverishly preparing for an attack on the USSR in accordance with the Kantokuen strategic plan, the Japanese command in China

and a specially set-up Japanese administration were hastily buttressing the Wang Jingwei regime. The puppet government's army was enlarged, and supplied 1,324 field guns. As much as 73 per cent of its firearms and mortars was modernised. And to enhance the mobility of the troops that took part in punitive operations against the anti-Japanese national liberation movement, they were reinforced with units of armoured cars.

The Soviet attitude towards the Japanese aggression in China was diametrically opposite to that of the imperialist powers, whose appeasement policy had essentially encouraged the invasion.* The Soviet people protested. They made known their sympathy for the embattled Chinese. The "Hands Off China" slogan was much more than a mere expression of solidarity: thousands of Soviet citizens wanted to help the Chinese as volunteers. Hundreds of Soviet pilots asked to be sent to China and fight the Japanese air pirates.

A five-year non-aggression treaty was concluded between the Soviet Union and China on August 21, 1937. Signed at a gloomy hour for China, it dealt a hard blow to Japan's aggressive policy designed to isolate China internationally. The treaty enhanced the Chinese government's prestige, and prompted some European and Asian leaders who had earlier hesitated, to come out in support of the embattled people of China.

China's material and technical condition changed. The Chinese government had reconciled itself to the loss of the North-eastern Provinces (Manchuria), which were economically more advanced than the northern and central provinces. What was more, it had done little or nothing to gear the country's economy to defence and had counted on the aid of the imperialist powers, primarily the USA.

Between March and July 1938, the Soviet Union twice granted China 50 million dollars' worth of credits. And followed this up with a 150-million-dollar loan in June 1939 to buy war supplies. Your author was involved in ensuring the security of the war

* Not only did Washington and London refrain from denouncing the Japanese aggression in China but maintained and expanded diplomatic and commercial relations with Japan right up to the end of 1941, that is, up to the time of the Japanese air and naval attack on Pearl Harbor and the outbreak of the war in the Pacific.

supplies en route from the Soviet Union to China for the massive Guomindang army (of more than 3,000,000 officers and men), so it would step up its resistance to the imperialist Japanese aggression.

By mid-February 1939 as many as 3,665 Soviet war experts were actively involved in the hostilities. Many of them were subsequently decorated with Chinese orders For Merit in Building the Land, Sea and Air Forces, and in Combat.⁵

Soviet railwaymen and road maintenance crews were active in China from 1938 to 1940. This greatly enhanced transports, which, prior to the Japanese invasion of the northern regions of Indochina, had gone from Haiphong port to Gejiu railway station and further via Tonghua to Kunming—an exceedingly intricate route that was constantly harrassed by Japanese saboteurs, who blew up bridges and destroyed roads, inflicting considerable damage to property, goods and vehicles.

In early June 1940 Soviet and Chinese road crews completed a 3,500-kilometre motor-road from Xinjiang (Sinkiang) to Lanzhou along the Soviet Central Asian frontier. Planes, tanks and heavy guns reached China by this road. And, as before, Soviet instructors trained Chinese in the use of the supplied equipment and weaponry, and in repairs and overhauls in field conditions when the enemy threatens from land and air.

Chinese General Feng Yuxiang described Soviet aid in the following terms: "While Japanese planes flying on US gasoline dropped bombs made of US steel on peaceful Chinese towns, transports with arms and ammunition, along with volunteer fliers, arrived steadily from the Soviet Union to help us resist the alien invaders. Soviet pilots died of wounds in Chinese hospitals before my very eyes. Meanwhile, the Americans sold steel and gasoline to the Japanese, and sent medical supplies to China to treat wounds inflicted by their bombs. Now decide for yourself, who is the true friend of the Chinese people."⁶

Mao Zedong wrote in 1940: "If China wants independence she can never attain it without the aid of the socialist state and the international proletariat. . . . In particular, the aid from the Soviet Union is an absolutely indispensable condition for China's final victory in the War of Resistance."⁷

A big part was played by the diverse Soviet military aid. From October 1937 to mid-1941, the Chinese were supplied a large

amount of Soviet arms and equipment, including more than a thousand aircraft, nearly a hundred tanks, 1,600 guns, as well as machine guns, rifles, shells, lorries and cars, and so on. By and large, Soviet aid stiffened Chinese resistance and averted the danger of surrender.⁸ Even Chiang Kaishek, the anticommunist, admitted that the US leaders were banking on "appeasement", and encouraged the rulers of Japan, the Japanese military command, to prepare as well as they could for an assault on the Soviet Union in the Far East simultaneously with the one in Europe.

It is appropriate to note here that after the outbreak of World War II, witnessing the triumphs of Hitler's Wehrmacht in Europe, where eleven countries surrendered one after another to Hitler's tender mercies, Chiang Kaishek began ignoring the agreement on maintaining a United National Anti-Japanese Front. On various pretexts he withheld the share of Soviet arms and equipment promised to the 8th Route and New 4th armies (Communist-led armies incorporated in the armed forces of the Guomindang), namely: field guns for four artillery battalions (48 guns) with 3 allowances of shells for each gun; 82-mm mortars for 8 companies (96 mortars), heavy machineguns for 12 machinegun companies (118 machineguns), a number of light machineguns, rifles and carbines, small arms ammunition, technical equipment for engineer companies, river-crossing equipment, and so on.

The Guomindang leadership was obviously impressed by the Wehrmacht successes. It expected Germany to turn soon against the Soviet Union, wipe out its armies, tear down Soviet power, and exploit the riches captured in the USSR to complete the conquest of the world without much delay, establishing a "new order".

The Chinese Communists who inspired and led the guerilla war and commanded the 8th Route and New 4th armies, armed and equipped their troops out of two sources—with arms, equipment and ammunition captured from the enemy in the battlefield and, second, with arms, mines and explosives made by local craftsmen.

In the early period of the war, the 8th Route and New 4th armies conducted guerilla operation, attacking and demolishing communication lines and airfields. But the absence of coordina-

tion between the guerilla forces and the regular Guomindang troops took the bite out of the strikes delivered at the enemy. The Japanese continued their offensive operations, moving farther and farther away from the Communist-led border regions and guerilla bases.

The Japanese command made the most of the anticommunist policies of the Chongqing (Chungking) and the puppet Nanking governments, which were increasingly becoming embroiled in "punitive campaigns" against Communist-led troops. It relieved part of the Japanese field troops to reinforce the armies preparing for the war on two fronts that was being planned against the USA and Britain in the Pacific and against the Soviet Union in the Far East. They rejoiced over the provocative operation mounted by the Guomindang forces against the New 4th Army in December 1939 and completed in January 1940, which gained worldwide notoriety as an act confirming the Guomindang's breach of the terms of the United National Anti-Japanese Front. It was now clear that the reactionary forces under Chiang Kaishek were least of all interested in fighting the war of liberation against Japan, and that their minds were occupied with the internal war of extermination they were waging against the Chinese Communists and their armed forces. It was clear, too, that China's reactionary forces—those of Chongqing and Nanking—were least of all interested in the antifascist war. If the men in Chongqing referred to it on and off, they did so to mollify the imperialist USA and Britain. In their hearts they were convinced that those two capitalist states would finally clash with the USSR and, hand in hand with Germany and Japan, bring about the defeat of the socialist Soviet Union, with the result that communist rule in that country would be destroyed, and the Chinese Communists, too, would be wiped out.

Certainly, if the 8th Route and New 4th armies and the Communist-led guerillas had been able to coordinate operations with the regular Guomindang troops, the Japanese would never have dared to mount their provocative armed incursion in the Lake Hasan area against Soviet Primorye (Maritime Territory) in August 1938, and much less the incursion of their 6th Army into the Mongolian People's Republic across the Khalkhin Gol (Khalkha River) at Nomonhan in the summer of 1939.

The results of these armed actions are well known—they ended in ignominious defeat for the Japanese militarists. And it would appear, too, that the clear victory of the Soviet troops at Lake Hasan and of the Soviet-Mongolian forces on the Khalkhin Gol would be a lesson not only to the Japanese militarists but also a model of endurance and patriotism, of military prowess in defending the socialist gains, for the leaders of the Communist Party of China in Yan'an.

The internationalists in Communist Yan'an were aware that the Japanese-provoked armed incidents against the USSR in 1938 and 1939 were for the imperialist USA and Britain, and also for Japan's fascist allies Germany and Italy, a test of the fighting qualities of the Japanese imperial army. But they were also aware that it was a test of their own ability to use the tactic of passive resistance to the Japanese aggression in the politically and administratively divided China.

For Japan the incidents were a show of its Pan-Asiatic strategy—a show put on for the benefit of the imperialist powers and of its fascist allies. And specifically in the field of foreign policy, it was a test of whether or not Japan's allies would honour Tokyo's claim to undivided domination over China and other Asian regions.

The leaders of the Communist Party of China in Yan'an understood these aims of the enemies of socialism and of the Soviet Union. Yan'an understood their anticommunist strategy, an important element of which was the participation in it of the reactionary Guomindang forces (in Chongqing and Nanking). For the Yan'an Communists the defeat of the Japanese at Lake Hasan and on the Khalkhin Gol offered a favourable opportunity to mount more vigorous military operations (by the regular 8th Route and New 4th armies and guerilla detachments in the border regions), inflicting losses on the enemy, liberating new areas behind the Guomindang lines and, in the final analysis, drawing the bulk of the enemy forces to the Guomindang front. Doubly so, because the defeat inflicted on the Japanese by the Red Army in 1938 and 1939 was known in China not only to generals and officers, but also to the rank and file of the Guomindang army, who now knew that the Japanese were not as frightening as they were made out to be, and that they could be defeated. Still, at that time, by orders from Yan'an, the Commu-

nist-led regular and guerilla troops devoted 80 per cent of their time to economic and only 20 per cent to military things, that is, combat drill. Their training was confined to skills required in combating the enemy's punitive detachments. This only added to the passiveness of the People's Liberation Army and the guerillas. At the end of 1938 (after the Wuhan industrial region fell into Japanese hands) eight divisions of the Chongqing Guomindang regime were deployed to cut off and blockade the communist border regions and guerilla bases, and also engaged in punitive operations against the troops in those regions and the local population. This brought to fruition the plan devised by the Japanese intelligence agencies to pit Chinese against Chinese in an armed confrontation. In due course, the armies of the puppet Nanking government, too, became involved in punitive operations against the PLA and the Communist-led guerilla forces.

In the meantime, the world situation served clear notice that the war would expand. All Soviet efforts to prevent it from turning into a world conflagration were, in effect, resisted by the USA, Britain and France, whose governments continued their policy of encouraging the aggressors to turn their armies loose on the Soviet Union and thereby eliminate the chief obstacle to a redivision of the spheres of colonial enslavement in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The Soviet government did everything it could to build a system of collective resistance to the warmongers. The Communist Party and the Soviet government had faith in the strength of the mass antifascist movement against war, and in the strength of the Chinese people, who were suffering from a colonial aggression on the part of the Japanese militarists. They had faith in, and gave moral support to, the struggles of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples against imperialist oppression.

In the circumstances, with the imperialist powers encouraging the aggressive intents of the Axis powers against the socialist Soviet Union, the Communist Party and the Soviet government lost no time to reinforce the country's defensive capability, concentrating all the physical and material efforts of the nation to this aim. Also, the Soviet leadership was doing everything it could to delay the hour when the Nazi horde would be loosened on the Soviet Union with the aim of destroying Soviet power and

enslaving the peoples of the USSR. This was why, on August 23, 1939, it concluded a non-aggression treaty with Germany. This was a forced measure which the Soviet Union had had to accept in the most complicated situation created by the aggressive Axis countries and the provocative policy of the US, British, and French governments.

The reactionaries of the world were out to destroy the world's first working people's state. Not only the survival of the Soviet people was in question. Also in question were the interests of the working people of all countries. The Soviet government knew perfectly well that the non-aggression treaty did not rule out a Nazi attack, that it only gave the Soviet Union a gain in time to buttress its defences, on the one hand, and denied the imperialists the hope of forming a united anti-Soviet front, on the other, sparing the Soviet Union from an immediate war in a most unfavourable situation.

The internationalist support which the Soviet Union gave the liberation movements of the peoples in the Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia, its aid to them in reuniting with their brothers, equal citizens of the socialist republics of the Ukraine and Byelorussia, their dream of many years, also benefited the Soviet Union's defensive capability. The Soviet Union backed the sincere and legitimate striving of the Baltic nations to shake off their antinational regimes of social oppression and connivance with fascism, and to join the family of free peoples in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, to establish the truly democratic power of workers and peasants.

The Soviet government deemed it right to meet the wishes of the peoples and to protect them against Nazi enslavement. It was also an opportunity to move westward the borders of the USSR, which was historically justifiable, and to fortify them against the imminent Nazi assault.

The above Soviet moves were accompanied by vigorous efforts to set up a collective security system in Europe with the chief aim of avoiding a war. Progressives in China, the country's Communists and internationalists, saw and appreciated the efforts of the Soviet Communist Party and the Soviet government to bridle the aggressors, to protect the gains of the Great October Socialist Revolution, and to support the oppressed peoples of the world fighting against imperialism and colonialism.

On September 28, 1939, when the German Wehrmacht was completing the conquest of Poland, Mao Zedong published an article entitled, "The Common Interests of the Soviet Union and All Mankind". He wrote, among other things, that "the Soviet Union has not only concluded a non-aggression treaty with China, but is also actively assisting China in its war against the Japanese invaders. When Britain and France sacrificed Austria and Czechoslovakia, thus encouraging Hitler's aggression, the Soviet Union did everything to expose the implications of the Munich policy and addressed Britain and France with a proposal to prevent any further spread of aggression." Mao added: "It is common knowledge that in the present international situation rejecting the Soviet Union is tantamount to rejecting peace."⁹

The Soviet Union also did everything it could to prevent a confrontation with Japan, Nazi Germany's Far Eastern ally. A Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact was signed in Moscow on April 13, 1941. When it was being negotiated, Joseph Stalin and Yosuke Matsuoka also discussed a possible settlement of the "China Incident" by means of a Sino-Japanese mutual security treaty ending the Japanese occupation of Chinese territory south of the Yalu River. The Japanese occupation forces would withdraw, and the people of China would resolve their internal problems on their own.

On all occasions when high-ranking Soviet diplomats met their Japanese opposite numbers, they tried to convince the latter that for the sake of peace in Asia it was essential to normalise Sino-Japanese relations on a basis of justice. The difficulties in achieving such a settlement, however, were enormous: Japan was intent on colonising the vast expanses of China, and exploiting its huge stocks of strategic raw materials and food resources, on the one hand, while, on the other, the reactionary rulers of the United States and Britain were eager to duplicate the Munich deal in the Far East and thereby direct the spearhead of Japanese imperialist aggression, like that of its allies (Germany and Italy), against the Soviet Union.

In the circumstances, the Neutrality Pact which the USSR concluded with Japan was an important move in favour of security and peace in Europe and Asia. It was a diplomatic defeat for Germany, which had counted on involving Japan in a war

against the USSR. At the same time, it spelled failure for the Munich policy pursued by the USA in the Far East, which endangered the interests of the USSR, of China, and all other Asian nations.

In his assessment of the Neutrality Pact, Lawrence Steinhardt, US ambassador in Moscow, said in June 1941 that he did not think the pact between the USSR and Japan was directed against the USA. It was a step, he said, to safeguard peace in the Pacific Ocean, for the Soviet Union had a dangerous neighbour in the West and was interested in ensuring peace in the East.¹⁰ Sir Stafford Cripps, British ambassador in Moscow, described the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact "as anti-German since," he said, "its only object can be to protect the Russian Eastern frontiers in the event of an attack on the west by Germany."¹¹ These views were a reflection of what the realistically-minded segment of the ruling class in the USA and Britain thought of the international situation.

The Soviet government was aware, however, that the Japanese were liable to break their word despite signing the neutrality pact, because the aggressive elements in Japan still thought that Germany should be helped if it attacked the Soviet Union. "If war should break out between Germany and the Soviet Union," Matsuoka said to Eugen Ott, the German ambassador in Tokyo, "no Japanese Prime Minister or Foreign Minister would be able to keep Japan neutral. In such a case Japan would be impelled by natural consideration to join Germany in attacking Russia. No neutrality pact could change anything in this respect."¹² But by its wise foreign policy, the Soviet Union made sure that its eastern frontier would not be violated throughout the war with Germany.

Chapter 2

The Military and Political Situation in East Asia and the Efforts of the Imperialist Powers to Exploit the China Theatre for Their Strategic Ends (1940-1941)

Following the conclusion of the Tripartite Pact in September 1940, Japanese-German negotiations were launched to work out a common strategy in the future war against the Soviet Union. There were considerable contradictions between Nazi Germany's allies, the chief one being their reluctance to permit any excessive strengthening of the other two.

Nazi Germany's Attack on the Soviet Union and Japan's Policy

With the German Wehrmacht scoring victory after victory in Europe, Japan began to fear that Germany would become strong enough to claim hegemony in the postwar world. During the Berlin talks between Germany, Italy and Japan in early April 1941, the negotiators focussed their attention on coalition strategy, and on Japan's degree of participation in it in view of the possible involvement of the USA on the side of Britain in the European war, and (in the event of a war against the Soviet Union) a possible joint effort against the Axis powers of the USSR, the USA, and Britain.

Considering Japan's strategic situation in Asia, the Nazis wanted to assign it the following tasks: 1) To rivet the attention of the USA and its armed forces to Asia and the Pacific, to pin them down, and thereby prevent America from joining the war in Europe, and 2) to continuously threaten the Soviet Union in the Far East and, if necessary, join in after Germany starts a war against it, thus facilitating a "lightning victory" over the chief opponent of the Nazi "new order".

It followed from this German proposal that Japan was being cast in an albeit important but subordinate role in Germany's global drive for world supremacy. This, of course, did not suit Japan.

Japanese Foreign Minister Yosuke Matsuoka retorted that the problem of the "southern" theatre (that is, Japan's war against the USA and Britain in the Pacific) would be resolved by Japan on its own. Replying to Ribbentrop and an Italian representative, who said the Tripartite Pact was aimed at preventing the United States from entering the war,¹ Matsuoka pointed out that they had overlooked the fact that Japan was engaged in a war in China. Whatever decision Japan makes, he stressed, whether related to the "northern" theatre (that is, a war against the USSR) or the "southern", it must take into account its state of war with China.

Matsuoka said his country was not yet ready for war against the Soviet Union and that the reasons for the setback on the Khalkhin Gol in the summer of 1939 had not yet all been determined. He suggested putting off a joint military venture against the USSR and maintaining good-neighbour relations with it—at least until a time when all the staging areas were ready, reserves were brought up, and forces capable of winning the war in the shortest possible time were poised for action.

Matsuoka argued that Germany's military operations against Britain would no doubt cause the United States to revise its isolationist policy and reverse its non-interference in European affairs. As a result, he said, it would join the war in Europe, and also give military and economic aid to Chiang Kaishek. Such aid would invigorate the Guomindang armies in the China Theatre, pinning down a considerable Japanese force. It would then be impossible for Germany and Japan to organise a simultaneous or nearly simultaneous venture against the Soviet Union.² If the United States joined the European war, he added, Japanese naval and land operations in the South China Sea, and against US bases in the Pacific, might yield much greater advantages to Japan's allies than an immediate Japanese attack against the Red Army. As Matsuoka saw it, Japanese military action in the South China Sea and the Pacific would meet the two important strategic objectives envisaged by its allies. The first of these was to pin down the main forces of the USA and keep them from joining

in the European war, and the second was to pin down a large Soviet force in the Far East by demonstrative actions of the Kwantung Army in Manchuria, thus doubtlessly easing the Wehrmacht assault on the Soviet Union.³

Each of the allied countries thus offered its own plan of winning world supremacy—in pursuance, above all, of its own particular aims.

Shortly before Matsuoka left Berlin for Moscow, Ribbentrop told him the German command looked upon Japan's position with understanding, but that it was everybody's view the Japanese government should be ready to fulfil its military objective in the Far East at Germany's first bidding.⁴ At the same time, Ribbentrop promised to help the Japanese to promptly resolve their China problem. While negotiating with Chiang Kaishek and his closest associates, the Japanese government should seek not only peace with China but also China's participation, or at least neutrality, in a war against the USSR. Ribbentrop told Matsuoka his government was prepared to instruct German diplomatic representatives in the Far East to assist Japan's peace efforts vis-à-vis the Chongqing government.⁵

Leaving Berlin for Moscow, Matsuoka had, in effect, obtained the consent of the Nazi government to allay Soviet fears over Japan's intentions in the Far East and Germany's in the West. He had convincing evidence, however, that Nazi Germany was preparing for war against the Soviet Union (though, it is true, he had not seen any detailed Wehrmacht plans). A Japanese military observer, Ken'ichi Nakaya, noted that it was Matsuoka's job to convince the Soviet leaders that the main effort of the European Axis countries would be aimed against Britain, and that the Soviet Union could at least count on non-interference in its affairs by Germany, Italy and Japan.⁶

During his talks in Moscow, Matsuoka tried to find out what the Soviet Union thought of Japan's intention to settle the Chinese problem through peace negotiations with Chongqing. He also tried to find out whether the Soviet government would agree to mediate peace between Japan and China.⁷ But the Soviet government's attitude towards China was friendly, and gave him no reason to expect Soviet mediation in the Japanese-Chinese conflict.⁸ The Soviet Union was firmly convinced that the Chinese people would win the fight for freedom and independence.

Matsuoka was shown that the Soviet people backed the people of China against the Japanese aggressors. That was why after returning to Tokyo, he told Premier Konoye that the Chinese problem could be settled only through direct contacts between Tokyo and Chongqing.⁹ He had very little faith, he said, in the mediation of Wang Jingwei's puppet government. Matsuoka said he was sure Chiang Kaishek would make peace with Japan if he were promised military aid against the Communist Party of China and its armed forces. Although this might strain Japanese-Soviet relations, he said, it was worthwhile, because with Chiang Kaishek as an ally, Japan could start the war against the USSR at about the same time as Germany. To sum up, Matsuoka tried to show the Japanese government that the situation in Europe was shaping favourably for a showdown between Japan and the Soviet Union.¹⁰ Matsuoka was convinced that now, with Germany preparing in all earnest to crush the Soviet Union, Japan's participation in the war as Germany's ally was absolutely essential, for it was the only way the "northern problem" could be settled in its favour.¹¹

This "northern strategy", Matsuoka said, would be backed by China's raw materials and manpower resources, and would have the sympathy of the American and British governments, which had long been seeking to embroil Germany and Japan in a war against the USSR. It was Matsuoka's opinion that whatever Japan could get in China, plus the war supplies that would keep arriving from the USA for a war against the Soviet Union, would greatly exceed the resources that Japan could expect to gain as a result of winning a war in the Pacific.¹²

Matsuoka's predilection for immediate war against the Soviet Union may be traced to the following. In May 1941, Matsuoka received information from Berlin about intensive Nazi troop movements towards the Soviet border. He sent a personal inquiry to Ribbentrop concerning Germany's immediate intentions vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. Ribbentrop replied that a German-Soviet war had become unavoidable and once it began, "the Soviet Union would be finished within a few months".¹³ The Nazi leaders were so sure of a lightning victory over the Soviet Union that Ribbentrop again declared Japanese forces would not be needed and that their lunge southward would be help enough.

Yet Matsuoka feared that if Germany defeated the USSR single-handed, Japan would be denied any of the fruits of the victory.

Outbreak of the German-Soviet War and Japan's New Designs in the China Theatre

Breaching the non-aggression treaty, Hitler Germany perfidiously attacked the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941.

The Kwantung Army in Manchuria was alerted. Troops were brought up to the border in accordance with priorly approved schedule.

During the first few months, marked by considerable Wehrmacht successes on the Soviet-German front, the General Staffs of the War and Naval Ministries of Japan closely studied the situation in Europe and amended their plans of war against the Soviet Union. Japan's civilian and military leaders disagreed over the probable course of the hostilities in Russia. Many doubted that Hitler's *blitzkrieg* would be successful. The controversy among the military was especially sharp. Generals of the ground troops favoured a radical solution of the "northern problem" first. They doubted that naval operations against the USA and Britain could be backed by enough oil and oil products. Nor did they think it wise to strain relations with the USA and Britain to the extreme, because the latter would inevitably take action to protect their positions in Southeast Asia.

The naval brass, on the other hand, held that conquest of the South Sea countries was essential before solving the "northern problem". They held that the war in Russia was sure to drag out and that before Hitler's panzers and mechanised divisions would reach the Urals, Japan would secure peace in China and capture Southeast Asia. Whereupon the Kwantung Army in Manchuria would have no trouble finishing off the weakened Russia. With Hitler Germany scoring major military successes, the situation in Europe, they said, was highly favourable for Japan. Lightning naval operations, they held, could in the circumstances solve all the problems and help set up a "new order" in Asia. Settlement of the "China Incident", they argued, depended on Japan's military successes against the Anglo-Americans in Asia and the Pacific. The Soviet Union, with its back

to the wall owing to the invasion of Nazi troops, could not prevent the Guomindang government in Chongqing from making peace with Japan. And the peace settlement in China that was sure to be reached after the first few naval victories over the USA and Britain, would at once enable Japan to begin preparing a staging area against the USSR not only in Manchuria but also in North China and Inner Mongolia. What was more, the navy people said, China's economy and manpower would help the Japanese empire to build the "new order" in Asia.¹⁴

The Japanese press and radio mounted a chauvinist propaganda campaign to "break the blockade" created around the empire by the USA, Britain and the Netherlands.

In the meantime, the General Staff and the logistics department of the Naval Ministry were making a close count of available strategic resources, notably oil and oil products, and drawing up proposals for the possible production of synthetic replacements. According to some estimates, Japan's stock of oil in 1939 totalled 51 million barrels. By December 1941, when the war in the Pacific broke out, it had shrunk to 43 million barrels.¹⁵ By that time, the navy had a stock of 21.7 million barrels of crude oil. The shortening of oil stocks by 8 million barrels in two years, while civilian consumption was, in effect, stopped and while armed operations in China were conducted with the minimum use of engines (aircraft, tanks, armoured cars and other motor vehicles), was alarming. Japanese military observer Takeo Fujita wrote that modern warfare called for considerable amounts of strategic raw materials. "During the Soviet-Finnish war, as many as 300,000 shells were fired in the fighting for Vyborg in a single day, and the Germans used up 100,000 tons of oil a day during the tense fighting on the Soviet-German front," he wrote, and added: "In a war against the USA and Britain, Japan will have to use the most sophisticated types of modern weaponry, and this, in turn, will call for a considerable consumption of oil and metal."¹⁶

General Suzuki, President of the Cabinet Planning Board, said in a special report to Premier Konoye that it was essential to look into the possibility of producing synthetic oil. He said this might be achieved provided the necessary capital, materials and knowhow were devoted to developing production techniques—the only way to obtain some degree of self-sufficiency

and avoid the considerable transportation costs.¹⁷ Suzuki requested two billion yen for research and the development of an up-to-date synthetic oil industry. This was essential, he said, if Japan was to produce 0.5 million tons of synthetic oil by the end of 1943, and 4 million tons by the end of 1944,¹⁸ and suggested siting the production of synthetic oil and other fuel in the Fushun coalfields in Manchuria and in the north of Shandong Province with its convenient ports. But Konoye and his cabinet were not sure the political situation in China would let them use local resources. Before establishing a synthetic oil industry in North China, Konoye said, the military command must guarantee security and calm.¹⁹ In October 1941, after General Tojo came to power, Finance Minister Kaya asked him what he thought of the Suzuki project. Before approving the big sum for research and development,²⁰ Tojo asked Suzuki and Kikusaburo Okada, chief of the Preparatory Committee of the Mobilisation Board, to substantiate its need.

The report submitted to the Premier showed that it was unprofitable and unrealistic to plan self-sufficiency in oil through the development of a synthetic oil industry. Okada's report noted that the Japanese government had already passed a law on synthetic oil production in 1937. A seven-year plan was drawn up (up to 1944), envisaging an output of 7.8 million barrels of synthetic oil by 1941. Only 1.2 million barrels, however, were produced by October 1941.²¹ Speaking for the War Ministry, Okada suggested expanding the Fushun synthetic fuel and lubricants plant in Manchuria. He also recommended prospecting in North China and Inner Mongolia where, according to Japanese experts, considerable deposits of natural oil and gas existed. The commander of the Japanese expeditionary army in North China reported to Tokyo that he would ensure peace and order there if the government gave him four or five more divisions, 500 tanks and as many aircraft. He also said that his staff was planning a mopping-up operation in Shenxi, where considerable deposits of oil and coal had already been found.²²

The reports of Suzuki and Okada alarmed the monopoly groups connected with the Naval Ministry and, consequently, favoured the "southern" strategic plan. Attending a meeting of the High Command Council in early November 1941, Admirals Shimoda and Nagano attacked the War Ministry's plan. They

maintained that the synthetic fuel and lubricants plant in Manchuria was not large enough, and that prospecting, even partial development, of the oil deposits in North China would not resolve the "strategic" problem. Doubly so, because the demands of the Japanese generals in North China were likely to weaken the imperial troops in Central and South China called upon to safeguard the gains already registered in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, the admirals argued, economic exploitation of North China resources by Japan was liable to complicate peace negotiations with the Chongqing government.

Premier Hideki Tojo gravitated towards the viewpoint of the navy. He figured that Japan had enough oil and oil products for two years of war. By that time, he held, the Japanese command would gain control of the oilfields in the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia), and if it managed to safeguard the currently operating wells, Japanese equipment shipped into the region would rapidly boost output. The oil problem would thus be solved.²³ Speaking at that meeting, Tojo declared that the East Indies oil, and seizure of oil stocks belonging to Japan's adversaries in Southeast Asia, would weaken the enemy's counterattacks. Shimoda and Nagano, for their part, stressed that the imperial ground forces command would have to keep the communication lines in China functioning for Japanese equipment and personnel going to the Dutch East Indies, because Pacific maritime communications would be strained to the extreme. This statement naturally displeased army commanders in China, for it cast them in the capacity of logistics chiefs, with the navy and marines playing the leading role.

Tojo's situation was exceedingly sensitive at that time. He was Premier, War Minister and Minister of the Interior all at once, and was expected to mediate in scuffles between monopoly concerns with a stake in the War Ministry's programme, that is, in Japan's immediate participation jointly with Germany and Italy in a war against the USSR, and the monopoly concerns that supported the "southern strategy" as a preparatory stage in a war to wipe out the "communist danger" in Asia and the rest of the world. The only problem that raised no conflict was that of China. All were agreed that both strategic options required a swift settlement of the "China Incident" in Japan's favour. There were only the "details" of the peace proposals left to be

thrashed out, namely, the future of Manchuria and Inner Mongolia, the future of Wang Jingwei's puppet government in Nanking, the pattern of further Sino-Japanese economic and political cooperation, and China's role in the war against the USA and Britain in the Pacific and also in the war against the USSR that was to start after the strategic objectives in Southeast Asia would be attained.

The Japanese government was sure Chiang Kaishek would not object to Japanese troops remaining in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia as an "anticommunist barrier". Japan had already turned these territories into a *place d'armes*—a springboard against the Soviet Union and the Mongolian People's Republic, and a base for joint operations by the Guomindang and the Japanese against Communist-led guerilla bases in North and Central China.

The puppet government in Nanking was designed from the outset as a bargaining chip for Japanese diplomats dealing with Chiang Kaishek and his clique. It was supposed to be a warning that if their resistance to Japan continued, they may be stripped of their part in ruling China. Having solemnly recognised the "government" in Nanking, the Japanese authorities lavished "special attention" upon it, watching its every step and seeing to it that it should not break out of control, even in trifles.*

At the same time, Japanese statesmen did not stand on ceremony in their dealings with Wang Jingwei and his "government". If Chiang Kaishek had only agreed to peace negotiations and demanded the dissolution of the Nanking "government" as a preliminary condition, the Japanese would have gladly consented. Still, the Japanese were sure that the differences between

* Wang Jingwei had previously been known as an admirer of Western democracy. Some US statesmen had no liking for the ambitious Chiang Kaishek, although he was closely associated with the American political and business world. Besides, owing to his military setbacks, Chiang was quickly losing popularity among China's vast peasant population. Although Wang Jingwei, who had openly gone over to the Japanese invaders, had thereby earned the loathing of the Chinese intelligentsia and national bourgeoisie, his liberal pronouncements and his past as a Guomindang leader won him the attention of the war-weary peasantry. That was why US statesmen did not abandon attempts to influence Wang Jingwei through private channels and use him in their interests.

Chiang and Wang were not really serious as concerned fighting the Chinese Communists and anti-Soviet strategy. They nursed the idea of "reconciling" and "merging" the two governments, reuniting the Guomindang and establishing an anticommunist and anti-Soviet bloc that Japan could use in its war plans against the Soviet Union.

Japanese statesmen went out of their way to demonstrate that they did not reject the "open door" principle. In fact, however, they wanted the doors to China to be widely open to them alone, and to other capitalist countries only to the extent that benefited Japan. General Suzuki, president of the Cabinet Planning Board, held that the government of the future friendly China must recognise the degree of cooperation achieved between Japanese and Chinese firms, and between Japanese and Chinese governmental and semi-governmental economic organisations. It would grant Japanese companies preferential rights to participate in the country's economic rehabilitation programme and would, lastly, become an equal member of the Japan-Manchuria-China bloc whose future lay in expanding the "Co-Prosperity Sphere" in Asia.²⁴ In other words, China was expected to acknowledge the economic expansion of Japanese monopoly concerns, and to grant them privileges in restoring what the Japanese army had destroyed. Considering the tremendous destruction and the other economic damage inflicted upon China during the hostilities, Japanese investments and, of course, profits in the rehabilitation of the war-ravaged Chinese economy would be tremendous. Furthermore, in the long term the Japanese planned to use China as an economic ally in the "Co-Prosperity Sphere", that is, make it a junior partner in Japan's conquest of Southeast Asia. No doubt, it would be exceedingly difficult to carry this programme into effect for it meant abject surrender to the aggressor and would affect the vital US and British interests in China.

As concerned future Sino-Japanese political relations, the price for Japan's "cooperation" would be Chiang Kaishek's acceptance of the Japanese anticommunist and anti-Soviet programme. As Japanese statesmen saw it, China could, depending on the political situation at home and internationally, assume an "active" or "passive" role in this programme. The active role was more desirable, and in that case China would be made an "equal" member of the Anti-Comintern Pact, assuming all the commit-

ments this entailed, while the passive role, though it ruled out passiveness vis-à-vis the Communist Party of China, meant that Japan would help Guomindang China to wipe out the communist threat at home, while in his relations with the USSR Chiang Kaishek would at the very least reject Soviet financial and military aid and annul treaties and agreements to that effect.

This programme, the Japanese leaders believed, could be expected to get a favourable reception on the part of the USA and Britain. They even believed that since the great powers would continue to grant China economic and military aid against the Communists, their wish to control the use of this aid should be regarded as legitimate. The presence in China of US and British representatives with such modest functions could be considered permissible.²⁵

It was in this spirit that the Japanese negotiated the China problem with the United States in Washington in the summer of 1941. Little by little, the US government bowed to Japan's demands. State Secretary Cordell Hull felt that the USA should reckon with the fact that Japan had waged war for four years and suffered considerable losses in China. It was, therefore, only fair, he held, that Japan's special interests in China should be honoured, at least within reasonable limits. But when Japan demanded that the United States should unconditionally recognise its special rights and interests in the Yangzi Valley and also recognise the Nanking "government" as sole representative of the "new" China, and consequently cut off all aid to Chiang Kaishek, the US government declared the Japanese demands impossible. Besides, Nazi Germany's sneak attack on the Soviet Union had radically changed the world situation, including the Far East. Whether advocates of the "northern" or of the "southern" strategy would win in Japan, and their further line of action in the China Theatre, depended largely on developments on the Soviet-German front.

In July and August 1941, Japanese statesmen and generals focussed their attention on events in the Soviet Union. The situation in the Soviet Far East, in Siberia and the Urals, was an object of especially close scrutiny. Reports from the Soviet-German front and the Soviet rear were discussed daily at special meetings in Premier Konoye's residence. They were passed on to the German ambassador, who forwarded them to Hitler's head-

quarters. They were anything but favourable for the Nazis, although the Germans were then scoring major victories on the battlefield. But the situation in the far rear of the USSR (the Urals, Siberia and the Soviet Far East) left no doubt as to the Soviet Union's growing powers of resistance and the delusion of the Nazi hopes of crushing the Soviet Union in a matter of two months.

In early September 1941, the view of possible developments on the Soviet-German front among leading Japanese statesmen and generals changed radically. Some of them were of the opinion that the war was becoming a war of attrition. The war theatre in Russia, they said, was enormous in size and could not be compared to Flanders; it consisted of plains and steppelands that enabled Germany to advance rapidly. On the other hand, it also enabled the Soviet Union to retreat in good order. Besides, partisan warfare was a considerable contribution to the Soviet Union's defensive capability. They went on to draw the conclusion that the war would not end soon and that Germany's military and economic resources were in danger of rapid exhaustion. They also held that food shortages in the occupied territories and in Germany proper would have an unfavourable effect on its political situation.²⁶

Still, these men held that Japan was honour-bound to keep the promise that Foreign Minister Matsuoka had made to Ribbentrop in Berlin in April 1941 that it would hold down the US armed forces and prevent them from joining the war in Europe on the side of the allies.

To turn the German-Soviet war into a war of attrition, they held, the Soviet Union would need US aid. The only port through which such aid could be shipped in was Vladivostok. And if the USA exerted any sort of pressure on Japan, this supply line would be closed. A hostile US attitude would compel Japan to go against the Soviet Union in alliance with Germany—which of course, would not contribute to the plan of making the war a war of attrition. Elaborating on this idea, Matsuoka said Germany's victory over the USSR would take the strain out of Japanese-American relations, because the USA would then have to transfer part of its Pacific Fleet to the Atlantic. Hence, future relations between Japan and the United States would depend wholly on developments in the German-Soviet war.²⁷

The Japanese government now laid the main stress on settling the "China Incident" as quickly as possible, and blamed the United States for its own failure to do so.

Washington described all these statements as blackmail meant to intimidate the USA and divert it from taking a final decision—whether or not it should participate in the European war. At the same time, the US ruling circles could not make any further concessions to Japan in China and Southeast Asia.

The United States rejected the Japanese claims, especially those concerning China, more firmly. In his discussions with Wakasugi, the Japanese ambassador in Washington, Under-Secretary of State Sumner Welles declared that the time of US concessions to Japan was over.²⁸

Time and again US officials let it be known that, considering America's immediate plans in regard of the Soviet Union, they could not agree to Japan's complete and uncontrolled domination of North China.

In the circumstances, Japan's ruling elite gave its final preference to the "southern strategy". After a stormy meeting of the Supreme Military Council in early November 1941, Japan's diplomats in Washington received instructions to "drag out the negotiations" until the Japanese task force that was to attack Pearl Harbor was concentrated in the staging area and the air force was ready to bomb naval and army targets in Hawaii.

The operational situation before the outbreak of the war in the Pacific was exceedingly tense for Japan. By the end of 1941 its ground troops were overextended in China along a front stretching from Mudanjiang and Hailar in North Manchuria to Hainan and the Chinese border with French Indochina. A Kwantung Army, well trained and well equipped, was deployed in Manchuria for an eventual war with the USSR. A peace treaty with Chiang Kaishek could have greatly eased Japan's situation. China would then be transformed from a fighting front into a large operational rear that could advantageously help to settle two problems at once: 1) Pin down the Soviet Union in the Far East and, if necessary, deploy the expeditionary army in North China to join the Kwantung Army for military operations against it, and, 2) use the expeditionary armies in Central and South China, the operational reserve shipped in from Japan, and all naval forces in an assault on the USA and Brit-

ain in the Pacific. Furthermore, with a peace concluded with Chiang Kaishek, the Japanese could use the Guomintang armies in North and Central China against the 8th Route and New 4th armies and Communist-led guerillas.

A favourable peace in China would enable Japan to fulfil its commitments to Germany and Italy with greater ease. The military situation in Europe, too, was spurring Japan to action. During the summer months of 1941, the British army had been compelled to leave Greece. Crete, that powerful British naval base, had fallen to the Germans. The British Navy was suffering heavy losses in the Mediterranean. There were those in Japan who believed that if German and Italian victories succeeded each other at this rate, nothing would stop them from capturing the entire Middle East. Besides, Nazi generals were saying Moscow would fall in the beginning of November at the latest. Tokyo was in great haste to disentangle its armed forces in China.

Chiang Kaishek, for his part, goaded by his hatred of communism and well informed about the difficult situation of the Soviet Union, knowing too that the United States would inevitably divert considerable forces and resources to aid Britain, its ally in Europe, was inclined to bow to Japan and become an ally of the fascist aggressors.²⁹

But the situation in China, the sharp criticism of the mass of the people, especially the Communists and progressive intellectuals, of Guomintang's policy towards the Japanese aggressors, and Chiang's resentment of Japan's policy of partitioning China, especially the fact that a "government" under his opponent, Wang Jingwei, had been set up in Nanking, his uncertainty that the Japanese would let him be undivided ruler of China if he made peace with them, coupled with the considerable long-standing ties that the Guomintang leaders had with the US business world—all this prevented Chiang Kaishek from going over to the Japanese side. Another important factor that worked against Chiang's laying down his arms and ending his resistance to Japan, was the extensive material, moral and political support that China received from the Soviet Union, and the dynamic activity of Soviet diplomacy in China. This meant that Japan's attempts to extricate itself from the "China Incident" encountered next to insuperable difficulties.

The United States and Britain became increasingly aware of the importance of the China Theatre in connection with Japan's obvious preparations for a war in the Pacific. Washington and London understood that, given the decisive importance of the Soviet-German front, which influenced the behaviour of the Japanese government and military establishment, China's withdrawal from the war was likely to alter Japan's strategy radically towards the USA and Britain in Asia and the Pacific. The US command obtained Chiang Kaishek's consent to building 14 airfields in the southwest of China to cover the communications linking Burma with that part of China and the more important cities in Southwest China.³⁰ Chongqing promised to build the airfields, fuelling stations, warehouses, and roads for the US Air Force. The United States sent an additional 45 bombers and 50 fighters to China.³¹ To service them, 150 pilots and technicians arrived between September and November 1941. Chiang Kaishek was pledged to use the services of US military advisers and to participate in all US and British military initiatives related to the threat of war in the Pacific.

But even after the war in the Pacific broke out, the joint American-British-Chinese command failed to produce a detailed plan for the China Theatre, for using China's large territory and manpower in the war against Japan.

In the meantime, Japan did not cancel its "peace offensive" in China. It still hoped to succeed in using the anticommunist element of Chiang Kaishek's policy to win him to its side.

But while searching for peace "approaches" to Chongqing, Japan did not abandon the method of military pressure. An important element of this pressure was Japan's activity in Indochina, aimed at blockading China in the south.

French Indochina, Thailand, the Dutch East Indies and Japan's Plans of Settling the "China Incident"

The Japanese government and High Command held that control over Indochina, Thailand and the South Seas would tilt the scales in favour of their strategic plans. To begin with, it would isolate China, and the China Theatre from the USA and

Britain, and that, so they hoped, would lead to China's surrender.

Even before France was defeated and over-run by Nazi troops, the Japanese government had taken certain steps in that direction. For one thing, it had warned the French government that Chinese troops were liable, "owing to the prevailing situation", to invade French Indochina. In view of this, it demanded closure of all overland communications and seaports, particularly the railway from Haiphong to China's southern border and the Yunnan-Kunming railway operated by the French. The French government rejected Japan's demand, qualifying it as gross interference in French internal affairs. In fact, Paris protested against the bombing of the Yunnan-Kunming railway by Japanese planes.³²

After the defeat of France, however, the Japanese government demanded in June 1940 that the French authorities immediately close the border between French Indochina and China, and cease all freight and passenger traffic to China. To control fulfilment, Japan intended to send inspectors who would verify that no military freight reached Chongqing via French Indochina.³³

The Vichy government* replied that it had on its own initiative banned transit to China of fuel and lorries as of June 17, and was taking steps to reduce shipments of other important materials. Vichy consented to using Japanese inspectors to verify the ban.³⁴ On June 25, 1940, the Japanese took advantage of its consent and sent a squadron with inspectors aboard to Haiphong.

But that was not all. On June 29, a Japanese mission under General Nishihara arrived in Hanoi and proceeded to establish control stations in Haiphong, Haiyang, Laokay, Caobang, Langson, and Fort Bayard.³⁵

Japan was eager to obtain Nazi Germany's approval of its actions. Eugen Ott, German ambassador in Tokyo, reported that the Japanese Foreign Ministry had told him on June 19 that Kurusu, Japanese ambassador to Berlin, had been instructed to inform the Nazi government of "Japan's special interests" in French Indochina. This meant, Ott had been told, that German

consent was wanted for Japan's "freedom of action" in that region and for its dealing directly with the Vichy government.

On June 24, General Akita Muto, a high-ranking War Ministry official, told the German military attache in Tokyo that the Japanese army would welcome German mediation in securing peace with China and that in this context Japan was also deeply interested in settling the Indochina problem. In a conversation with the Japanese Overseas Minister General Koiso on this score, Eugen Ott tried to find out what the latter thought of the Indochina problem. If Japan succeeded in concluding a non-aggression treaty with the USSR, and Japanese troops entered Indochina, Koiso said, Chiang Kaishek would understand that he had been isolated and would have to accept Japan's peace terms.³⁶

Japanese statesmen were saying that Japan would be prepared to place part of French Indochina adjoining China's southern border under Chiang Kaishek's administrative control once peace was concluded with Chongqing.

But Japan's Indochina plans had a cool reception in Berlin. The Nazi were disturbed by Eugen Ott's report that, by all evidence, such prominent Japanese statesmen as Yonai and Arita were gravitating towards a rapprochement with the United States and Britain.

Ott told Koiso that Berlin could not at that moment deal with the Indochina problem and considered it more important to ascertain Japan's determination to act against the USA in the Pacific—attacking the Philippines and Hawaii to prevent the United States from intervening in the European war.³⁷

Germany's displeasure was also evoked by what it thought was insufficient Japanese aid to the Nazi Reich in breaking the Anglo-French economic blockade. Emil Wiehl, Director of the Economic Policy Department of the German Foreign Ministry, stated in a memorandum to his government that only a few transports with strategic raw materials had come from Japan in recent months. In January 1940, Japan had concluded a contract with Manchukuo for soya beans without informing Germany and had released only 70,000 tons of beans for shipment to Germany. This was much less than contractually agreed.³⁸ At the same time, Japan had secured Germany's pledge to halt shipments of war materiel to China, which was a considerable

* The French fascist collaborationist regime that functioned from July 1940 to August 1944, during the occupation of France by the Nazi. So named because Vichy was its seat.

loss to Germany and deprived it of a rich source of raw materials. In the opinion of the Nazi leaders, Japan could make up for this damage by helping the Germans get bigger shipment of strategic raw materials from Southeast Asia.

Naotake Sato, former Japanese Foreign Minister, who came to Berlin in July 1940 on an unofficial visit, assured Ribbentrop that if a politico-military alliance were concluded with Germany, Japan would be ready to fulfil its duty of ally in the Far East since it directly confronted the United States, Britain and France which had considerable interests in that region. Japan's actions in Asia, Sato maintained, could prevent the United States from intervening in the European war. But, he said, Japan must end the war in China as quickly as possible in order to have a free hand in dealing with future allied objectives. Among the important measures that could result in a peace with Chongqing, he added, was the closure of all routes leading to the southern and southwestern regions of China. That was why Japan hoped that the German government would exert pressure on Vichy to conclude an agreement with Japan to the benefit of allied interests and facilitating the establishment of a "new order" in Europe and Asia.³⁹

Ribbentrop told Sato his government would consult the Vichy authorities and do its best to help Japan. But, he said, Germany expected a palpable Japanese contribution to the drive for a "new order". He reminded Sato that German soldiers had, at the price of considerable casualties, already contributed greatly to that drive.⁴⁰ On returning to Tokyo, Sato reported that the German position betrayed signs of weakness because the scale of the European war and the prospect of America's involvement in it were preventing Berlin from dealing with the Asiatic colonies of Britain and France. This was why, he said, Japan's efforts to extricate itself from the "China Incident" and its actions against the United States, could pave the way to the early conclusion of a politico-military alliance with Germany, which would yield additional German support. He concluded that Japan should "act more firmly and boldly in Indochina".⁴¹

Negotiations were begun at once in Hanoi and with the Vichy government's ambassador in Tokyo. Under German pressure, the latter was compelled to conclude an agreement with Japan on September 22, 1940,⁴² explaining that French concessions to

Japan were "the only way to save what was to be saved in Indochina".⁴³ The French statement stressed there was no guarantee in the agreement that Japan would withdraw its troops after the hostilities in China ceased. Although the agreement was not officially published, the Japanese government made haste to elucidate its substance. "France agreed," it announced, "to afford in French Indochina all such facilities of a military nature as are required by the Japanese army and navy for executing their campaign for the settlement of the China affair."⁴⁴

Despite US protests, the Japanese hurried to consolidate themselves in Indochina. Soon after the above Japanese government statement was made, units of the imperial army moved into Indochina from Guangxi Province, while Japanese transports landed marines in the port of Hanoi.⁴⁵ The Japanese occupied Haiphong and three airfields on the shore of the Gulf of Tonkin. While doing so, they captured a column of lorries with war materiel heading for China.⁴⁶ On the heels of the army, Japanese "businessmen" appeared in towns of Northern and Eastern Indochina, buying up rice, coal, rubber, iron ore, tin and other important strategic materials, as well as foodstuffs,* at low prices, and imposing trading privileges for Japanese merchants.⁴⁷

In the northern part of French Indochina, Japanese troops were so stationed as to control not only transports to China, but also all internal movement of goods. On the pretext of verifying goods going to China, Japanese inspection posts detained and "confiscated" raw materials and foodstuffs.

Japanese behaviour in French Indochina caused a crisis within the French administration. Tokyo did not take French complaints seriously. In July 1940, with the advent of Fumimaro Konoye's second cabinet, which proclaimed the goal of setting up a "Co-Prosperity Sphere" in East Asia (meaning, in substance, conquering Southeast Asia), the French administration again requested Tokyo to spell out the legal status of the Japanese garrisons and to indicate the Japanese government's intentions. Konoye's official reply was that French Indochina was part of the zone of Japan's special economic and strategic interests, and

* In July-October 1940 Japan purchased goods worth 47.5 million yen (in 1940 prices), amounting to the annual figure of trade with all countries of the Indochina Peninsula in 1936 (*Boeki nankan*, Tokyo, 1941, pp. 216-219).

that his country intended to station its troops there. By so doing, Japan expected to accomplish two strategic tasks: that of improving its position in the war against China, and that of preparing the ground for ousting Britain, which was taking part in the economic blockade of Japan in Asia, from Southeast and South Asia.

Upon receiving this reply, the Governor-General of French Indochina, General Catroux, turned for help to the United States and Britain in July 1940. But he received no reply, and dispatched a mission headed by Colonel Jacomy to Washington in an effort to purchase aircraft and other weapons so as to resist a Japanese invasion of Indochina. But that mission, too, proved unsuccessful. Countering Catroux's demarche, the Japanese government redoubled its pressure on the Vichy government to stop such "anti-Japanese" measures.⁴⁸

In mid-July 1940, General Nishihara met General Catroux and again raised the question of the "Chinese threat" which necessitated bigger Japanese garrisons in the northern part of Indochina. Catroux replied that the question of additional Japanese troops could be settled only by direct negotiations between Japan and France. At the end of July 1940, the Vichy government recalled General Catroux and appointed Vice-Admiral Jean Decoux in his place.

The Konoye government negotiated with the Vichy ambassador in Tokyo, Charles Arsène-Henry, while economic issues were discussed by Suzuki, Japanese consul-general in Hanoi, with the local authorities.

On August 1, 1940, Japanese Foreign Minister Matsuoka demanded of the Vichy government that it should permit Japan to have military bases and trans-shipment stations in Indochina to supply the Japanese army with requisite materials. The Vichy ambassador rejected the demand because, he said, it would be tantamount to France joining the war against China. Besides, he said, there were no guarantees that this demand, if it were granted, would not be followed by more demands of the same kind. Matsuoka replied tersely that if Vichy did not comply, Japan would resort to force.

The Vichy government, however, continued trying to obtain assurances that Japan would not invade Indochina. Matsuoka declined to guarantee anything. He knew perfectly well that the

army and navy general staffs had already drawn up plans for introducing more troops into French Indochina, and that the requisite force had already been alerted. On August 21, Matsuoka demanded that Japan be allowed to set up air bases in Hanoi, Pulan, Tuange and Putho where it would station 5,000 to 6,000 air force personnel.⁴⁹ He also demanded that the Japanese should be granted free use of the Haiphong-Hanoi-Laokay and Hanoi-Langson railways for military purposes without French control over what troops and in what numbers were being moved. Expecting Nazi backing, the Vichy government delayed its reply. It knew that in the circumstances the last word in its relations with Japan belonged to Berlin.

But Matsuoka, too, knew this. He had wasted no time and had contacted Berlin through ambassador Ott as far back as August 2, requesting Ribbentrop to exert pressure on Vichy. Since there had been no reply, he told Ott on August 15 that Vichy was creating difficulties in settling the Indochina problem, and again asked Germany to influence Vichy. Berlin, however, was anything but delighted over Japan's claims to French and Dutch possessions in Asia. Ott explained to Matsuoka that the reply from Berlin was slow in coming because German influence on the French government in Vichy was limited as yet. The true reason for the delay, however, was Ribbentrop's wish to create the most favourable conditions for Berlin at the Tripartite Pact negotiations.

In the meanwhile, the Vichy government instructed its representative in Chongging to inform Chang Kaishek of Japan's demands and to ask him to pass on their content to the US diplomatic and military representatives. On August 26, 1940, Chiang Kaishek issued a statement, saying that if Japanese troops should appear in Tonkin he would order his troops to cross into Indochina.⁵⁰ The Vichy government took advantage of this statement to declare that Chiang Kaishek would not ask for Tokyo's permission to send troops into Indochina, which would mean the end of the sovereign French administration in Indochina.⁵¹

On August 30, the Vichy ambassador in Tokyo and Matsuoka exchanged notes. Vichy recognised Japan's preferential right to economic and political influence in the Far East, and agreed to grant Japan economic and commercial advantages over third powers in Indochina. Appreciating Japan's desire to end, or at

least reduce the scale of, the war in China as soon as possible, the Vichy government agreed to instruct its military command in Indochina to study the Japanese demand for bases. But it refused to sign any agreement, much less a treaty, with Japan without preliminary guarantees of the territorial inviolability of French Indochina. Simultaneously, Vichy agents requested the US government to exercise pressure on Tokyo and insist on the requisite guarantees.

When Nishihara suggested to Decoux to open negotiations in accordance with a preliminary understanding reached by Matsuo and Vichy ambassador Henry, the Frenchman said he had received no instructions to that effect from his government. So a new round of negotiations followed through the Japanese charge d'affaires in Vichy, Sawada. As a result, Decoux received his instructions on September 2. But they contained no specific brief and were evidently intended to delay the negotiations until replies were received from the USA and Chiang Kaishek. Nishihara countered this foot-dragging tactic with a warning that additional Japanese troops would advance into Indochina on September 5. He also instructed Consul-General Suzuki to prepare to evacuate Japanese nationals.⁵² This had its effect. On September 4, General Nishihara and General Martin, commander of French forces in Indochina, signed a military agreement.⁵³ Under this agreement, Japanese personnel, including civilian employees, to be shipped in via Tonkin, was not to exceed 25,000. Moreover, as long as the said agreement was being finalised no Japanese soldier was to step on the soil of French Indochina. General Nishihara expected work on the agreement to be completed on September 6. But on that day, before the two sides had come to terms on the details of the agreement, a Japanese battalion crossed the border into Indochina in the vicinity of Langson. Despite Nishihara's attempts to prove that this had been necessitated by "self-defence" without the knowledge of the Japanese command or administration, Decoux declared it a breach of the terms worked out on September 4, and broke off the talks.

On September 17, the Vichy authorities in Indochina announced that they were accepting the Japanese proposals. This virtual surrender gave the Japanese government grounds to hope that in due course it would obtain still more favourable positions

in Indochina. On September 19, General Nishihara presented Decoux with a new demand: now he wanted 32,000 Japanese officers and men to be allowed into Indochina. The demand was accompanied with a demonstrative evacuation of Japanese civilians from Hanoi and Haiphong, while Japanese warships arrived in the Gulf of Tonkin. The Japanese expeditionary army in South China was poised to attack Dong-Dang and Langson. Having failed to win the support of the USA and Britain, the Vichy government had no choice but to bow to the new demand, and on September 22 Admiral Baudouin, representing Vichy, signed an agreement to that effect with General Nishihara aboard the Japanese cruiser *Kawachi*. In effect, the northern region of French Indochina was thus being surrendered to the Japanese militarists. The latter used it to tighten their economic blockade of China, and also turned it into a military staging area to expand the Japanese aggression in Southeast Asia.

Under the Nishihara-Baudouin agreement, the Japanese were allowed to use the bases they had earlier seized in Tonkin, and to bring in up to 6,000 Japanese air force personnel there. They were also permitted shipping up to 25,000 Japanese servicemen from South and Southwest China across the Gulf of Tonkin to eventual battlefields. Japanese troops were massed on the Chinese side of the border in the Langson area. A secret annex to the Nishihara-Baudouin agreement permitted them to cross into Indochina at any time and proceed in any direction on the orders of the Japanese command in South China.⁵⁴

But the Japanese ran into serious difficulties when they tried to carry out the terms of the secret annex. French border guards had been ordered to stop any Japanese troops in excess of the number stated in the agreement from crossing the border. And since some 6,000 Japanese officers and men were already stationed at air bases in Tonkin, an armed clash ensued when units of the Japanese 48th Division tried to cross the border on September 25. The French border troops could not stand up to the Japanese assault and withdrew from the Langson area. The clash showed that the Japanese had orders to concentrate troops for reasons that had little in common with the blockade of China and concerned far-reaching Japanese plans in Southeast Asia. This could not be concealed from US diplomats and spies watching the events in Indochina with a wary eye.

The noisy anti-Japanese campaign raised in the US press, coupled with the Vichy government's complaints to its Berlin patrons, compelled the Japanese to withdraw troops that had "violated the terms of the agreement" to the jump-off line in Chinese territory. On October 2, to demonstrate Japan's fidelity to the agreement and its "respect" for Vichy France, General Nishihara was replaced by General Sumita. Japanese troops that had crossed into Indochina at Langson returned to South China and French border guards returned to Langson.*

But the Japanese command in South China decided to make up for its setback at Langson. It schemed to provoke a conflict between Thailand and French Indochina so as to gain its aims in French Indochina, on the one hand, and to pave the way to establishing its influence in Thailand, on the other.

A pertinent campaign had long since begun. The Japanese occupation authorities spread rumours that Marshal Luang Pibul Songgram's government in Thailand was planning to extend the Pan-Thai movement to the entire Indochina Peninsula. Relevant "documents" were said to have been fabricated in Chinese and in languages spoken in Indochina. Japanese agents circulated them all over French Indochina. The "documents" revealed the Thai government's plans to promote a Pan-Thai movement in the Shan States of Burma, West China and in Laos and Cambodia,** which were French protectorates. As if this were not enough, the Japanese radio in Indochina maintained that Luang Pibul Songgram "had announced his intention to unite under the flag of the great Thai state" all Cambodia, the southern part of Burma, and to claim back the four Malay states of Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Trengganu "lost" under the Anglo-Thai treaty of 1909.⁵⁵ According to intimates of Marshal Luang Pibul Songgram, this Japanese propaganda made a strong impression on the Thai leaders. They liked the chauvinist idea of a "great Thai state", of which they could priorly only dream, especially because Japanese propaganda was being conducted in the name of influential Tokyo circles and gave them reason to hope for

* At the War Criminals Tribunal in Tokyo, Tojo said he had ordered the replacement of General Nishihara, while the officers who had been involved in the Langson operation were executed, also on his orders (CORSIA, file 92, sheet 49822).

** People's Republic of Kampuchea as of January 1979.

"fraternal" Japanese aid in carrying out "Thailand's just dream."⁵⁶

At the same time, however, Japanese propaganda was inciting anti-Chinese sentiment inside Thailand. It demonstrated that Chinese immigrants, especially numerous in the 1930s, had seized control of the country's economic and political affairs. This propaganda was all the more effective, because Guomindang China was in those days doing its utmost to prevent the Chinese in Thailand from assimilating and to use them as its agents. The anti-Chinese sentiment that was aroused by this policy was being exploited by the Japanese to weaken the Thai government's resistance to their insistent demands to conclude a treaty of co-operation.

Such a treaty was, to be sure, partly obstructed by the non-aggression treaties Thailand had signed in Bangkok on June 12, 1940, with Britain and France. At that time, the Japanese government had also signed a treaty with Thailand under which the two countries were to "exchange information and consult upon matters of mutual interest".⁵⁷ In this way Japan hoped to gain access to requisite information about the intentions and actions of France and Britain, its probable adversaries. The Anglo-Thai treaty was ratified on August 31, 1940, while the Franco-Thai treaty was not owing to the defeat of France in Europe. This gave both Thailand and Japan a free hand, and enabled the latter to provoke a Thai-French armed conflict.

On September 13, 1940, not without encouragement from Tokyo, the Thai government demanded that the Vichy French abandon the western bank of the Mekong, including the Cambodian border territories and the Cambodian provinces of Battambang, Siem Reap, and Sisophon.⁵⁸ Naturally, Vichy spurned this demand. So in September 28, 1940, after consulting Tokyo, the Thai government came out with still harsher demands: that France renounce the protectorates of Laos and Cambodia in favour of Thailand. Vichy rejected these demands too, and called the Thai government's attention to the fact that it was "acting on the instigation of a third party".⁵⁹ Thereupon, the Japanese command in South China and in French Indochina organised incidents on the border between Thailand and Indochina.* These

* Between October 3 and 10, 1940, Japanese squads disguised in French army uniforms provoked armed clashes on the border between

led to an armed clash between the Thais and the French, with the air forces and artillery of both sides being involved.

Now the Japanese government let it be known that it would mediate the Thai-French conflict as a party that had a stake in peace because its main purpose was to end the war in China as soon as possible, while a new front near China's southern border might interfere with or simply divert Japan's efforts. While reassuring all concerned that it was looking for a formula that would appease both sides, the Japanese command in South China and French Indochina had instructions from Tokyo to come to Thailand's aid if Vichy rejected its demands.⁶⁰ The Japanese government knew that the state of the Thai armed forces left much to be desired and that if it came to a test of strength the Thai government would turn for aid to Japan.

The Japanese figured that if, by supporting Thailand, they forced Vichy to renounce its rights in French Indochina, this would enable them to offer Chiang Kaishek freedom of navigation for Chinese shipping in the Gulf of Tonkin in return for a peace agreement.

The Japanese government intended, indeed, to partition French Indochina, with Thailand getting Cambodia, while the rest of the territory would make a buffer state between Thailand and China with a pro-Japanese policy.

This would integrate Thailand in the East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere under Japan's aegis. There would be access to Thai rice and various strategic raw materials; besides, Japan would be able to use Thai territory for an eventual thrust into Malaya and against Singapore. The sharpening conflict between Thailand and French Indochina, and Japan's role in it, created alarm in the United States. In early October 1940, the US government let Premier Luang Pibul Songgram know that it was displeased with his behaviour and was forced to stop delivery of airplanes to the Thai army. At the same time, it announced that it guaranteed the status quo of French Indochina. Encouraged, the Vichy government announced its rejection of Thai territorial demands in Laos and Cambodia on October 15.⁶¹

Indochina and Thailand, in which the Thai border guards sustained considerable losses.

Japan's Inner Cabinet gathered on November 5 to discuss the US stand and the Vichy government's rejection of Thai demands. It decided to "offer assistance" to Thailand in the fulfilment of its territorial aspirations in return for cooperation both politically and economically in the establishment of the East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.⁶² On November 21, the Inner Cabinet met again and decided to warn the Thai government that Japan would withdraw its support if it confined its demands to just the territory on the western bank of the Mekong. As a result, the Thai government found itself between two fires.

Early in January 1941, Admiral Decoux, who was certain that the armed conflict would inevitably expand, called on Vichy for reinforcements. Four French battalions were ordered to Indochina from Djibouti. But the transport carrying them was turned back by a British cruiser. The Thai government, for its part, requested the British command in Singapore to mediate its conflict with the French following a naval engagement at Koh Chang on January 17, 1941, in which a French destroyer sank the finest ship of the Thai navy. A British representative arrived in Bangkok and suggested on behalf of his government that the hostilities should be ceased at once and a peace concluded with British mediation.

This turn of events disturbed Tokyo. The Konoye government protested to Decoux over the "British interference". To seize the initiative, the Japanese sent their own "draft of the peace talks" to the belligerents on January 21, 1941, and offered mediation aboard the Japanese cruiser *Natori* in Saigon harbour.⁶³ On January 30, 1941 the negotiations on the *Natori* ended with the conclusion of an armistice. Under this accord both sides, the Thais and the French, were to withdraw their troops ten kilometres from their positions. Taking advantage of its role of mediator in the peace talks, the Japanese command brought more troops to Haiphong and Hanoi.

Further Franco-Thai talks were transferred to Tokyo, and opened on February 7. The Japanese government did everything it could to drag them out. The Tokyo press went out of its way to create the impression that US and British interference was obstructing their progress and that Japan, the "sole champion of peace", was taking all measures to bring the views of the two sides closer together.⁶⁴ A joint Japanese-Thai-French communi-

que of March 6, 1941, announced that agreement had been reached on the principal points. The text of the treaty was published on March 11 in the form of a letter sent by Japan to the two other participants in the talks. The letter said that Thailand and France had each agreed to conclude no arrangements with third powers which might involve them in any political, economic, or military collaboration, direct or indirect, against Japan.⁶⁵

For France the terms of the treaty were highly onerous. Vichy pledged to let Thailand have part of Lao territory on the western bank of the Mekong, and to relinquish Cambodian territory along the Mekong up to Stung Treng and then along the line running from that town to Tonle Sap (Big Lake) and farther in a south-westerly direction to the Gulf of Siam. All this territory was to be demilitarised, and transit or residence there of foreigners or their business agents was subject to the consent of both sides. This meant that Thailand got about one-third of Cambodia and a considerable portion of the Laos Protectorate.⁶⁶

Formally, the treaty entered into force only on May 9, after Japan had informed Germany of its terms and had it apply pressure on Vichy to accept them.

The Japanese government was naturally keen to make the most of its incursion into French Indochina. Its aims were not just military and strategic (against China and the rest of Southeast Asia), but were also focussed on securing additional supplies of strategic materials and foodstuffs. In May 1941, a Japan-Indochina trade committee was formed in Osaka, with missions in all the larger commercial towns of Indochina.⁶⁷ The communique announcing the establishment of the committee said its purpose was to build up trade between Japan and Indochina, and also to promote exchanges of commercial information and shipping in Southeast Asia.⁶⁸ Among other things, as we see, it was conceived as an above board agency gathering economic and political intelligence which would, at once, control the flow of goods to China through ports and communication lines in French Indochina.

On May 6, 1941, at the residence of the Japanese Foreign Minister in Tokyo, an unequal convention was signed on the "residence of Japanese citizens in the territory of French Indochina, and customs duties and payment commitments of the sides

in commercial transactions".⁶⁹ The Vichy envoy revealed its true implications in a speech following its conclusion. Japan's efforts in establishing the "new order" in Asia, he said, and the sacrifices it was making in China entitled it to preferential influence in the countries of Southeast Asia.⁷⁰

The Japanese garrisons in the bigger cities and ports on the eastern and southeastern seaboard of Indochina, and the numerous Japanese businessmen who arrived there, made no bones about flouting the terms of the just concluded convention. On June 5, 1941, a mere month after its signing, the Japanese command demanded that the French should give it exhaustive information about the amount and variety of goods that had passed through the ports and along the roads of Indochina to Chongqing in the preceding months of 1941. On the same day, the Canton press reported that the Japanese command in French Indochina had agreed with the local authorities that the latter should move the goods that had accumulated in the ports to safer areas and hand over the warehouses in these ports to the Japanese. By mutual agreement, Japanese vehicles had moved 147 tons of various freights destined for China from transshipment stations in the northern part of Indochina.⁷¹ This, in effect, raised the curtain on China's blockade from the south. On June 14, 1941, the Japanese army commander in South China extended the zones closed to shipping in the Strait of Taiwan and the South China Sea.⁷² The eastern and southeastern seaboard of China had been effectively blockaded, with Japanese patrol ships keeping an especially tight watch on the main ports there—Canton, Amoy, Swatow, etc.

Simultaneously, Japan again sought to incite a conflict between French Indochina and Thailand so as to weaken the former still more and tighten its grip on the peninsula on the one hand, and to place Thailand under more sweeping control, on the other, by encouraging the Thai leaders' ambition to take advantage of the tense situation and push apart the frontiers of their country at the expense of the neighbouring colonial states. Detachments of Japanese scouts spurned the official Japanese pledge to abstain from armed actions, reached out to the western border with Thailand and, disguised as French border guards, provoked armed clashes with the Thais. They planted Japanese-produced maps showing the "disputed sectors" of the

border between Thailand and French Indochina. Clearly, another armed conflict was brewing between Indochina and Thailand.

In this setting of artificially created tension, the Japanese government again undertook to "settle" the conflict between the warring sides. A Franco-Thai protocol additional to the peace treaty of May 9, 1941, was signed through its mediation. It contained more precise data about the limits of the Cambodian territory turned over to Thailand, and reaffirmed its demilitarisation. Thailand was permitted to keep a police force there, but was forbidden to build fortifications, airfields, landing strips, and other military facilities. The protocol provided for political co-operation between Japan and Thailand, and also between Vichy and Thailand. Japan and the Vichy government guaranteed Thailand's political and territorial independence and integrity. The Thai negotiators pledged to establish friendly, good-neighbour relations with Japan, and declared that they had no intention of concluding any arrangements which might involve them in political, economic or military collaboration, direct or indirect, against Japan.⁷³

The signing of the protocol with Thailand was seen in Japan as "a brilliant victory of Japanese diplomacy". The Japanese gave it especially wide publicity in China. On June 14, during a three-hour air raid on Chongqing, Japanese flyers dropped thousands of leaflets with an "extra" report portraying Japan as the sole protector of Asian nations, the only one who "understood the aspirations and dreams of Asian peoples". The "extra" ended with an appeal to Chiang Kaishek and the Guomindang to join Japan in achieving peace for the peoples of Asia.⁷⁴ Japan saw the protocol with Thailand as a serious setback for US prestige, since the US government had expected Thailand—the only independent country in Southeast Asia—to stay out of the Japanese "co-prosperity" model. On June 9, 1941, at an extraordinary session of the Thai parliament, Premier Luang Pibul Songgram said that after the peace conference in Tokyo the friendly relations between Thailand and Japan had made further progress and that if Japan became involved in a war with third countries, Thailand would not sell the latter any goods of military importance.⁷⁵

The "peace conference in Tokyo" did create some confusion

in Washington. The United States decided to respond with economic sanctions against Thailand: sales of oil and oil products, metal goods, and a few other items, were banned. Since Japan would not supply them to Thailand owing to the tension created by the China war and Japan's war preparations against the Soviet Union, the United States expected Thailand to "repent" and return to the US fold. But this did not happen. To begin with, Thailand's backward agrarian economy was no great consumer of oil and oil products, or of metal goods. Second, on Tokyo's advice, the Thai government sent a delegation to Batavia (now Djakarta) at the end of May 1941 to negotiate deliveries of oil and oil products with the authorities of the Dutch East Indies. The Japanese monopolies wanted to tack on to the Thai economic delegation and obtain a new source of oil supplies. And they succeeded to some measure, because the oil purchases under the agreement concluded for 1941 and 1942 greatly exceeded Thailand's own needs. Besides, the agreement establishing a shipping line between Bangkok and Batavia offered the Japanese new opportunities for contacts with the East Indies through the Thais.⁷⁶

Seeing the Thailand was gravitating towards Japan, and in view of the resulting loss of important strategic positions in Southeast Asia, the US and British governments went out of their way to consolidate their position in the Philippines and the Dutch East Indies. On May 4, 1941, the National Assembly of the Philippines banned the export of manganese ore, copra, vegetable oil and Manila hemp. The President of the Philippines was accorded the right, if necessary, also to ban exports of other strategic materials.⁷⁷

Earlier, on Washington's recommendation, a decision had been taken to double the militia, raising its complement to 100,000 men.⁷⁸ This measure was officially explained as a part of the country's preparations for "sudden exigencies".⁷⁹

On May 28, 1941, an emergency conference attended by President Manuel Quezon and US High Commissioner Francis B. Sayre gathered in Bagio. It discussed emergency measures to buttress Philippine defences.⁸⁰ The day before, on May 27, by an agreement between the USA, Britain and Australia for joint defence in the Pacific, a British cruiser dropped anchor at the naval base in Cavite. It was clear that the United States and Bri-

tain considered the Philippines the chief bridgehead in the event of an armed threat to their colonial positions in Southeast Asia and the Pacific. But all the "emergency" measures they took to block Japanese aggression, proved belated. The Indochina Peninsula and, consequently, the approaches to China from the south and southeast had already, essentially, been wrested from the USA and Britain.

The allies also tried to block Japan's attempts to use the raw materials of the Dutch East Indies in its interests. Back on April 12, 1941, Dutch Foreign Minister Van Kleffens and Minister of Colonies Charles Welter had been invited to Manila, where spokesmen of the United States, Britain and Australia set forth to them the essence of their allied policy in the Pacific.⁸¹ They were told that the events in Europe and Japan's antiallied actions in Asia, especially in the South China Sea and Indochina, called for a drastic revision of allied strategy in that region, and, in particular, of the attitude towards the Sino-Japanese war.⁸² Although the United States continued to sell oil, oil products and other strategic wares to Japan, its spokesman in Manila suggested that the Dutch exploit Japan's dependence on imports of key strategic materials, especially oil, and thereby frustrate its expansionist policy in Southeast Asia.⁸³

As a result, an atmosphere of tension and mutual suspicion reigned at the meeting that Japanese officials had with their Dutch counterparts in April and May 1941 concerning sales of oil and other strategic materials. The Dutch even went so far as to tell the Japanese that Japan would regain the trust it had enjoyed previously only if it renounced its policy of infringing on the interests of the great powers in China and Southeast Asia, and if it went back to the tested "open-door" policy in China.⁸⁴

The Japanese press raised a howl about "the efforts of the great powers to hinder Japan from fulfilling its commitments under the 'Tripartite Pact'". The Japanese people were called to combat the "encirclement and blockade of Japan" by the United States, Britain, and the Netherlands. Japan's warlike stand made the Dutch officials to slightly soften their attitude.

But the United States continued to exercise pressure on the Netherlands, and in early June 1941 US State Secretary Cordell Hull met the Dutch ambassador in Washington and spoke to him at length about the US view of Holland's economic negotiations

with Japan. And though at a subsequent press conference Hull declared that the US government had received no new evidence that the talks between Japan and the Dutch East Indies would reach a crisis,⁸⁵ the very next meeting of the Japanese-Dutch economic committee broke down. The negotiations were terminated. Yoshizawa, who headed the Japanese delegation at the talks, told the press that the Dutch position had been so tough and unsatisfactory that any further negotiations would run into great difficulties.⁸⁶ In the next few days, the Japanese made repeated attempts to renew the talks, but after a semi-official meeting Yoshizawa had with his Dutch counterpart a report was published that Japanese and Dutch officials deeply regretted that their economic talks had yielded no satisfactory results. The failure of the talks, however, the report said, would not wreck normal relations between Japan and the Dutch East Indies.⁸⁷

After the breakdown of the negotiations in Batavia, the Japanese press and radio redoubled their criticism of the great powers, blaming the US and British governments for the failure of the Dutch-Japanese talks. Official quarters in Tokyo indicated that the most effective measure now would be a military and diplomatic offensive in China. The Japanese said that Chiang Kaishek and his army, which pinned down and inhibited Japan's initiative in Southeast Asia, were the main trump the USA had against Japan.⁸⁸ To knock this "trump" out of America's hands was the chief aim of Japan's foreign policy. If this was not done, the Japanese said, Japan would not be able to live up to the commitments it had assumed in Berlin in April 1941 on tying up the United States. Chiang Kaishek was to become an ally of the Axis powers at all costs, and play a conspicuous role in their strategy and drive for a "new order".

The Situation in the China Theatre in 1941

Seeing that the showdown in the Pacific was quickly approaching, Japan did its utmost to put an end to the "China Incident". Through pro-Japanese elements in Chongqing its diplomats tried to persuade Chiang Kaishek to end his resistance, to conclude peace, and even take Japan's side in the fight for a "new order" in Asia.

Japanese war correspondents reported from Nanking and

Shanghai that the Japanese peace drive was making good headway, and that this was enhancing the prestige of the Wang Jingwei government. Their reports dovetailed with official communications of Japan's special envoys with the "government" in Nanking. The Japanese government responded with steps to heighten the prestige of the Nanking puppets and to create the impression that their government was truly national, truly Chinese. On April 27 and 28, 1941, a series of political and economic concessions and privileges was announced despite the adverse conditions of the continuing war.⁸⁹

The command of the Japanese 13th Army with headquarters in Shanghai, received orders from Tokyo to hasten the establishment of a Chinese "national army".

The Japanese "architects" of this puppet army hoped to use Chinese "cannon fodder" against those Chinese who continued to resist the Japanese occupation. In three months (July-September 1941), with the direct assistance of the Japanese expeditionary army in Central China, 39 infantry divisions (546,000 officers and men) were formed and armed according to an official announcement. This "national army" had 736 guns of various calibre (17 different artillery systems), and a squadron of training aircraft.⁹⁰

Tokyo pinned much hope on this army. It expected to use it in an offensive on Chongqing, and against "communist" armies in North and Central China. The Japanese military establishment saw it also as a reserve that would, to some extent, cover the rear of the Japanese army in the future big war against the Soviet Union, and also against the United States and Britain in the Pacific.

The Japanese Naval Ministry and Naval Staff held that Wang Jingwei's army would, in general, permit Japan's ground forces in China to devote more attention to coordinating their operations with the navy when offensive operations were mounted in the Pacific. Admiral Sokichi Takagi, representing the Naval Staff wrote to the Emperor on June 27, 1941:

"A war against the USA and Britain in the Pacific will inevitably compel them to reduce their military and economic aid to the Chongqing regime. The Soviet Union, embroiled in a war in the West, will, in turn, be unable to render China the aid it had rendered before. Chiang Kaishek will inevitably face the

problem of whom to join in order to preserve China and himself as its dictator."⁹¹

Admiral Takagi believed that the Guomindang regime would reject allies who could not back him materially; still less would he seek alliance with Communists or those who support Communists in China. And Takagi concluded by voicing the opinion that Chongqing and Nanking could be induced to join efforts against their common enemy inside the country, the CPC.

Many naval leaders shared the admiral's view and suggested using the Wang Jingwei "government" as mediator in talks with Chongqing. Although few people in the world considered the Wang Jingwei regime independent, still less national and Chinese, they said, because it worked in Japan's favour, it should not be ignored, especially as a bargaining chip in peace negotiations with Chiang Kaishek. So long as it existed and threatened Chiang Kaishek's regime, the latter would always demand the dissolution of the "national government" in Nanking as a condition for a ceasefire. So Japan would always have a trump it could use in its dealings with Chiang Kaishek. It could use the Wang Jingwei government as a lever of pressure. With this in mind, the Japanese took new steps to "heighten the prestige of the Nanking regime" and redoubled the propaganda for peace between Japan and China.

The Japanese government issued strict orders prohibiting as of July 1, 1941, the confiscation of enterprises and property belonging to Chinese in the occupied part of China especially if they favoured cooperation with Japan. Instructions were issued to encourage Chinese merchants, and permit them to open firms and shops. Special instruction No. 224 of the Japanese commander in North, Central and South China called on the occupation authorities to redouble propaganda of Japanese-Chinese cooperation. Levies of manpower in North China and forcible shipments of workmen to Manchuria were stopped. The Kwantung Army which had more than 5,000 families brought in from North China to build fortifications, released them and helped them return to their homes.

On June 17, 1941, the commander of the Japanese garrison in Shanghai was ordered to turn over a squadron of aircraft to the Nanking regime "for governmental communications" with the rest of "national China". In due course, the Japanese prov-

ided air and radio communications specially for secret ties and diplomacy between Nanking and Chongqing.

From the moment instruction No. 224 came into force and until November 1941, the press and radio in Nanking and Shanghai suspended their sharp attacks on Chiang Kaishek and his closest associates. The Chinese press controlled by the Japanese and Wang Jingwei called on Chongqing to join efforts with Nanking in combating the Communist Party and the guerilla armies in North and Central China.

Japan also took specific action to that effect. In the summer of 1941, on the initiative of the Japanese command, meetings were arranged in North and Central China between commanders of the Central government's army units and those of the Nanking puppet army to coordinate operations against guerilla areas and bases.*

The Japanese command provided both Guomindang and puppet troops taking part in punitive expeditions with arms and ammunition (out of booty captured from the Guomindang army). This gradually became regular practice: Chongqing and Nanking troops carried out joint anticommunist expeditions with Japanese backing.

Chinese historians describe the second period of the Sino-Japanese war, which began after the fall of Wuhan, as a period of "equilibrium". They do so because no large-scale operations occurred at that time owing, as they claim, to a rough parity of strength. Both sides were chiefly on the defensive, and the several offensive operations mounted by small forces of Japanese altered nothing in the overall operational situation. But, certainly, this was not due to any equilibrium. In the summer and autumn of 1941, with the Nazi troops scoring their early large-scale successes against the Soviet Union, the Guomindang armies were essentially passive. They all but ceased their punitive expeditions against guerilla areas in the belief that once the USSR was defeated by Hitler Germany, the Chinese Communists would be sure to collapse automatically.

* Documents found later show that the plans and the operational and tactical situation prior to the punitive expeditions against guerilla areas and bases were recorded on maps published in Japan. Some intelligence reports, too, were written in Japanese.

This pattern of things gave the Tokyo leaders faith in a peaceful settlement of the "China Incident". At the same time, the people's liberation forces in China, notably the 8th Route Army also scaled down their guerilla actions in the enemy rear and against enemy communications.

Guomindang troops chose passive defence because of the "summer's heat". The Japanese armies in China made plain their readiness to halt the fighting against Chiang Kaishek and go over to peace negotiations. The command of the People's Liberation Army, on the other hand, justified the decline in guerilla warfare by "Chiang Kaishek's reluctance to make war against the Japanese" and by "Chongqing's failure to keep its promise and supply the 8th Route and New 4th armies with arms, ammunition and food".

In Yan'an, Mao Zedong and his entourage, though they expressed sympathy for the Soviet people in connection with the toughest war Russia and the USSR had ever fought, pursued their own, nationalist line of "non-participation in the war on the side of the Soviet Union". Spurning the remonstrances of the internationalists in the Party's ranks, Mao Zedong, in effect, withheld any and all aid to the USSR if only by stepping up guerilla actions that would pin down at least some Japanese forces and prevent them from opening a second front against the Soviet Union. Mao Zedong and his supporters declared their principle was to "spare and accumulate strength" so as to counter the "anticommunist campaigns" of the Guomindang reactionaries.

The Japanese command made the most of the resultant situation to shift troops along North China communication lines to Manchuria and strengthen their Kwantung Army. The latter's strength went up from 400,000 in 1939 to 700,000 in 1941. Out of this reinforcement of 300,000 some 150,000 officers and men had been shipped in from the Sino-Japanese front.⁹²

The temporary calm was used by the Japanese for a new large-scale diplomatic and propaganda offensive in China, ostensibly paving the way to an armistice.

Yet it was exceedingly difficult for the Chongqing leaders to enter into peace negotiations with Japan. Scraps of information from quarters close to the Guomindang's military and political leadership showed that they "digested" proposals coming from official Japanese quarters "with difficulty". The behaviour of

Chongqing officials was closely watched by observers from Washington. The Soviet Union, too, followed developments in China most carefully. Early in the summer of 1941, Chiang Kaishek was compelled to admit in face of incontrovertible evidence that some of his close friends had contacts with the enemy; he reshuffled the government and the party leadership, replacing prominent officials intimately connected with him because of their vacillation and readiness to come to terms with Japan. Foreign Minister Wang Zhonggui was demoted to the modest post of secretary of the Chongqing Military Council, while China's ambassador in London, Guo Taiqi, took his place. Wu Decheng was appointed secretary of the Guomindang's Central Executive in place of Zhu Jiang, who was retired.⁹³ More than 450 officials of the Chongqing Military Council and the Legislative and Executive yuans were either retired or shifted to other posts.⁹⁴

But official US quarters were not satisfied with the reshuffle. They feared that it would only reinforce the opposition to Chiang Kaishek and increase the number of those who favoured peace with Japan.

Washington decided to increase its surveillance over Chongqing. In May 1941, Ambassador Nelson T. Johnson was replaced by Clarence E. Gauss. The newly-appointed ambassador, who arrived by plane via Hong Kong, was accompanied by Brigadier-General Henry Clagett, commander of the US Air Force in the Philippines.

US military and civilian advisers flocked to Chongqing in July and August 1941. Their main purpose was to prevent negotiations between Chongqing and Tokyo, at least behind Washington's back. At the same time, the United States promised Chiang Kaishek a hundred aircraft to buttress his air defences.⁹⁵

Responding to this move, Japanese planes began bombing Chongqing and communication lines between Southwestern China and Burma. Until July 1941 they bombed mainly roads leading to Chongqing and bridges and river crossings on the Yangzi and Beipangzi between Yunnan and Guizhou. But on July 5, for all of three hours a large force of Japanese planes bombed the outskirts of Chongqing and military targets in the city. Air raids on Sichuan cities became frequent. Altogether, Chongqing was raided 32 times for a total of more than 70 hours between May

3 and September 28, 1941. More than 600 planes took part in the raids.⁹⁶

The Japanese command also sought to cut the supply routes leading from the Soviet Union to China. On July 19, 1941, Japanese planes bombed Lanzhou and Xi'an (Sian). Later, smaller groups raided trans-shipment stations along the way from Urumchi to Xi'an. Referring to these raids, General Hata, commander of the Japanese expeditionary forces in China, said the recent rapprochement between the USA and the USSR was compelling Japan, in the interests of its defence, to control northern supply routes to China.⁹⁷

The Konoye government, as we see, though seeking peace negotiations with Chongqing, still felt constrained to demonstrate Japan's military muscle. This was easy enough, the Japanese command held, because after four years of the "China Incident", that is, by July 1941, the Japanese army group in the China Theatre was quite considerable. Ever since 1937, the number of Japanese divisions there kept rising at the following rate.⁹⁸

	China	Japan and Korea	Manchuria	Total	Total strength
1937	16	3	5	24	950,000
1938	24	2	8	34	1,300,000
1939	25	7	9	41	1,240,000
1940	27	11	12	50	1,350,000
1941	27	11	13	51	2,110,000

Thus, by the summer of 1941, Japan's position in China looked so reliable to its leaders that they believed it to hold an edge over any enemy, whether "northern" or "southern". All the more so because China was politically split into three parts, and any minute a bitter armed struggle was liable to break out between them. This gave the Japanese authorities in China an opportunity to be "pacifier" or "peacemaker", with either role yielding them unquestionable benefits.

The only thing that troubled the Japanese leaders were Nazi Germany's successes in the war against the Soviet Union in the

summer and autumn of 1941. They were afraid they would miss the bus when, after the defeat of the USSR, Soviet territory would be carved up among the winners, and were eager to end the China war.

On August 16, 1941, Premier Konoye sent Taichi Muto, publisher and editor of *Hochi*, a newspaper, to Nanking with the text of an appeal that the Wang Jingwei "government" would address to Chiang Kaishek's Chongqing government, entitled "Before It Is Too Late". The appeal, drawn up in Tokyo, stressed that the United States had turned China into an instrument of US policy, obstructing the creation of the East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere, in which united China would, along with Japan, hold a leading place.⁹⁹ The appeal said "the Soviet Union, which is on the brink of defeat, will not be able to prevent the USA from pushing China into a war against all Asia. . . . China will be alone, isolated from the rest of Asia, and will inevitably perish." The appeal suggested that China should unite its forces, cease resistance, conclude peace with Japan, and "lean on Japan's strong shoulders and arms before it is too late".¹⁰⁰ Wang Jingwei "endorsed" and signed the text. The Japanese and their puppets started a powerful propaganda drive to back up the appeal, making Chiang Kaishek and his government take notice of it.

Official US representatives in Chongqing reported Chiang Kaishek's vacillations to Washington. The US government formulated the question of China more rigidly in its negotiations in Washington.

The situation in the summer and autumn of 1941 on the Soviet-German front, where the future of Asia as well as Europe hung in the balance since the Axis had set itself the aim of winning world supremacy, required serious decisions on the part of the US government. It was becoming increasingly clear that China was playing an important role in countering the plans of the Axis countries in Asia. It was also increasingly clear that effective military aid to the Chongqing government was necessary to step up resistance to the Japanese and pin down their forces in China. The collapse of the German *blitzkrieg* in Russia and the crushing defeat of the Nazi assault force at the approaches to Moscow in early December 1941 ended all hesitation in Washington, London and Chongqing. The United States and

Britain now resolved to abandon their wait-and-see policy and to back up the anti-Japanese forces in China.

Now, Wang Jingwei's appeal of August 16, 1941, that had at first perplexed the Chongqing leaders, lost all its weight. The "early defeat of the Soviet Union" promised in the appeal, and the threat that "China will be alone, isolated", and even that it would "inevitably perish", no longer looked real in December 1941.

For its part, the Japanese government now saw that the USA and Britain would do their utmost to keep the China Theatre operational, because it was an important factor now for their future relations as allies of the Soviet Union. It decided to put pressure on Chongqing. Shortly before the attack on the USA and Britain in the Pacific, the Emperor's General Headquarters in Tokyo issued a special directive (No. 286) to the commanders of the 14th, 15th and 25th armies and the 2nd and 3rd fleets, explaining the special importance of the South Sea region, notably the countries of Indochina, in the bid to destroy the Washington-London-Chongqing bloc and isolate the China Theatre from the fronts in the Pacific and in Europe.¹⁰¹

Chapter 3

China As Japan's Supplier in the Pacific War

In April 1941, the general staffs of the Japanese army and navy were instructed to speed up preparations for a strategic offensive in the Pacific with the end purpose of "expelling the United States and Britain from the Pacific and the South Sea countries and establishing an Asiatic Co-Prosperity Sphere under Japanese leadership".¹ The task was exceedingly difficult. First, because a large part of the Japanese army was in China, with its crack divisions stationed in Manchuria. Second, while plans of a war against the Soviet Union had long since been drawn up and elaborated upon in the course of ten years, i.e., since the outbreak of the Manchurian events in September 1931, and tested during the Japanese-Soviet border clashes and the hostilities at Changgufeng and Nomonhan (that is, Lake Hasan and on the Khalkhin Gol) in 1938 and 1939, no such war plans had been drawn up against the USA and Britain in the Pacific until the spring of 1941, nor had these been elaborated upon and tested in any way.² Third, the Japanese economy, though largely primed for a "big war", had no experience in backing up hostilities against an enemy doubtlessly stronger than China and, for that matter, even than Japan.³

Raw Materials and Shipping Lines

Since the chief strategic principle of the Japanese military leaders was the same as that of their Western ally, Germany (a surprise, lightning strike with superior forces, stunning the

enemy and leaving him no choice but to surrender), the Naval Staff drew up a corresponding plan of war in the Pacific. It assumed that after an initial devastating blow, Washington would start looking for appeasement on terms suggested by Japan.⁴

The Naval Staff was sure that the Soviet Union and Chiang Kaishek China would absorb their graphic lesson and learn not to ignore the capability of the imperial army and navy, the readiness of the entire Japanese nation to fight for an East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.⁵

But when the plan was put before the Supreme Military Council and the Emperor's General Headquarters, they noted that it underrated the enemy's economic power and military-industrial potential. How badly these were underrated may be seen from the table below on the US-Japanese ratio of basic raw materials (with Japanese stocks equal to 1):⁶

	1931	1937	1941
Coal	14.3 : 1	9.9 : 1	9.3 : 1
Oil	418.1 : 1	514.3 : 1	527.9 : 1
Iron ore	175.5 : 1	121.7 : 1	74.0 : 1
Pig iron	41.7 : 1	15.7 : 1	11.9 : 1
Pig copper	14.0 : 1	8.9 : 1	12.1 : 1
Aluminium	—	12.1 : 1	5.6 : 1
Overall ratio, including other strategic raw materials	111.4 : 1	75.6 : 1	77.9 : 1

True, Japan had been hoarding strategic materials for some years. Despite President Roosevelt's order of July 2, 1940, not to sell Japan strategic raw materials as a response to its invasion of French Indochina and the blockade of China, US oil monopolies supplied Japan with 2,300,000 barrels of crude oil in 1940, and as much as 4,500,000 barrels from 1937 to the summer of 1941.⁷ How large this amount was may be judged from the oil allocation of only 2,800,000 barrels asked by the Japanese Navy in connection with the planned naval offensive in the central part of the Pacific in December 1941-February 1942.⁸ Still, the stockpile was obviously insufficient if the war should drag out.

The Supreme Military Council instructed the Economic Plan-

ning Committee to produce a thorough estimate of Japan's economic potential for both a lightning victory and a drawn-out war of at least two or three years.

The authors of the war plan were sharply criticised for underestimating the vulnerability of Japanese land and sea communications that would inevitably become much longer and would have to cope with far greater amounts of freight. The latter point was especially important, because Japan counted on strategic raw materials streaming in from conquered lands in the South Seas in the very first few months of a successful offensive. These were essential to back up the still broader plan of capturing the "northern territories", that is, the Soviet Far East and Siberia.

It was, indeed, planned to set up a specially trained body of men who would follow the army and would, under its protection, confiscate and ship off to Japan raw materials, semi-finished goods, available stocks of ready products, as well as equipment and vehicles. A specific order was ready for signing which instructed commanders of expeditionary armies to "form special units for protection against explosions and arson, and for removing raw materials and equipment belonging to the enemy, or his armies and institutions".⁹ Army and navy unit and subunit commanders were to be rewarded for "capturing and handing to army logistics offices military materials and food belonging to the enemy".¹⁰

This order was already being enforced in the occupied regions of Central and South China. In the summer of 1941, an additional instruction issued to Japanese troops in China required "better protection of communication lines in North and Central China to ensure the safety of raw materials and manpower en route to Manchuria"¹¹ where a military-industrial complex was being built.

But the plans of plundering the resources of the South Sea countries, as I have pointed out earlier, required a huge merchant fleet and extensive overland transport facilities. And with the successful development of the offensive, the volume of freight was bound to increase. Inevitably, too, the communication lines would be continuously attacked by the air force and navy of Japan's enemies.*

* Despite the threat posed by guerillas behind the Japanese lines, overland communications across Chinese territory were considered less

The shortage of locomotives and railway cars, and especially of shipping, was the biggest problem.

On November 5, 1941, at an imperial meeting, Teichi Suzuki, President of the Economic Planning Committee, presented estimates of Japan's mobilisation potential in the event of a war in the Pacific. Among other things, he mentioned the Japanese shipping potential, and the capacity for repairs and for building new ships. Suzuki based his estimates on 1941 output targets—over 4.5 million tons of steel (of which the navy would get 1.1-1.2 million and the army 0.79-0.9 million, with 2.4-2.6 million tons left over for "civilian consumption").¹² More than half the steel earmarked for civilian consumption, however, would also go to make machinery and other products for the army and navy (as well as for repairs of locomotives and railway cars, freighters and naval transports).

Suzuki submitted some estimates of the "civilian" freight that would have to be moved chiefly by sea, with food shipments from October 1941 to September 1942 totalling roughly 80 million koku (1 koku=0.283 cu m). Ten million koku were to come from Indochina and Thailand, 3.1 million from Formosa (Taiwan), 6.9 million from Korea, with 59.1 million koku being the harvest in Japan proper.¹³ The estimate did not include shipments of food to China (and Manchuria), where the Japanese army and civilian population were expected to procure local supplies.

From just the Dutch East Indies in the first year of its occupation the Japanese government counted on receiving 6,000 tons of nickel ore, 1,200 tons of tin concentrate, 17,000 tons of bauxite, 17,000 tons of crude rubber, 13,000 tons of copra, 20,000 tons of corn, 7,000 tons of salt for the chemical industry, and 20,000 tons of sugar.¹⁴ The Dutch East Indies was also to pro-

vulnerable. Their five years of war in China had taught the Japanese that guerilla attacks on communication lines were no more than sporadic. Since the guerillas did not even try to retain control over the roads and railways, the Japanese had no difficulty in repairing what guerilla demolition groups had destroyed as soon as the latter moved out. According to Japanese figures, the Peking-Hankou and Peking-Suiyuan railways were put out of commission for 863 hours in 1939-1940, amounting to an average 35-36 hours a month, which, of course, did no great damage to Japanese activities. See *Senjo-no nikki, kotsu hen* (Field Diary, Section on Transport), Peking, 1942, p. 8.

vide 300,000 kilolitres of crude oil in the first year of the war, 2,000,000 in the second and 4.5 million in the third. With the oil being refined on site, this was estimated to yield 75,000 kilolitres of aviation gasoline in the first year of the war, 330,000 in the second, and 540,000 in the third.¹⁵

To transport these "civilian" cargoes, the Japanese required a merchant tonnage of at least three million gross tons. This allowed for average annual losses of 800,000 to 1,000,000 tons, with some 600,000 gross tons of new shipping being commissioned yearly.¹⁶

Privately-operated Japanese shipping (totalling 3 million gross tons at the outbreak of the war), carrying an average of 850,000 gross tons of industrial goods and foods a year, was to be used for military needs.

For transport of troops and cargoes during the offensive operation in the Pacific, the army and navy would, in the first four months of the war, have a tonnage of 2,100,000 gross tons; in the fifth month of the war the tonnage would total 1,700,000 tons, in the sixth 1,650,000, in the seventh 1,500,000 and in each succeeding month 1,000,000 gross tons. The navy would, therefore, require shipping totalling 1,800,000 tons per month. This fleet would consist of tankers (270,000 tons), fishing boats (94,000 tons), freight-passenger boats (336,000 tons), freighters (110,000 tons) and small boats (15,000 tons).¹⁷

But all these estimates reposed on the assumption that the Japanese armed forces would score success after success, on land and sea, with enemy resistance weakening and the Japanese gradually winning full command of the air and on land. They overlooked the actual situation and the enemy's strength. The war in the Pacific dashed these estimates to the ground, as we will see from the following table on Japanese merchant tonnage after the outbreak of the war (in gross tons).^{*18}

The table shows that the tonnage sunk exceeded that of the newly-built ships. The privately-owned tonnage used only for military shipments also considerably exceeded Suzuki's estimates. In addition, much of the shipping belonging to private

	Total tonnage	Including			
		private tonnage used only for mili- tary ship- ments	sunk tonnage	newly- built tonnage	confiscated private tonnage
<i>1941</i>					
December	5,421,143	1,513,600	67,181	4,929	64,936
<i>1942</i>					
January-March	5,169,375	1,588,444	180,097	61,782	59,353
April-June	5,336,411	1,693,516	168,114	45,219	21,735
July-September	5,562,560	2,214,018	210,568	69,732	73,172
October-December	5,419,009	2,217,324	403,529	63,010	524,838
<i>1943</i>					
January-March	4,964,218	1,862,228	343,690	131,032	173,921
April-June	4,831,606	1,831,571	332,217	62,398	77,915
July-September	4,584,369	1,692,413	363,339	164,630	210,433
October-December	4,267,548	1,616,832	622,586	201,098	139,623

companies was confiscated (and never returned) by the Japanese armed forces, especially during the tensest period of the hostilities in the Pacific. To recover losses was exceedingly difficult, depending on the construction of new ships and repair of old ones. A fairly considerable part of the losses was being recouped at China's expense.

From December 1941 to March 1944, the Japanese occupation authorities captured 374 ships of more than 100 gross tons displacement each in the occupied ports of East China and on the Yangzi. More than 230 ships and motor vessels of more than 50 gross tons each were repaired and recommissioned in the docks and harbours of Dagu, Qingdao, Weihaiwei, Shanghai, Hangzhou, and Canton. In all these years, some 500 vessels of 50 and more gross tons each were built or recommissioned in China with the use of the cheap Chinese labour, their tonnage adding up to more than 672,000 or nearly one-fifth of Japan's total merchant tonnage in March 1944.⁹

* Only ships of 500 tons displacement and over were counted here, including vessels captured in combat and vessels damaged in the fighting and repaired.

Despite all efforts, Japan's transport fleet kept shrinking continuously. The rate at which this occurred during the war in the Pacific may be seen from the table below:

Changes of Japanese Merchant Tonnage During the War in the Pacific*
(000 gross tons)

	Newly-built or otherwise obtained	Total losses	Indicator of tonnage reduction	Total at end of year	Index
December 1941				6,384.0	100.0
December 1942	661.8	1,095.8	-434.6	5,942.6	93.0
December 1943	1,067.1	2,065.7	-998.6	4,944.0	77.0
December 1944	1,736.1	4,115.1	-380.6	2,564.0	40.0
August 1945	465.0	1,562.1	-1,037.0	1,626.9	24.0

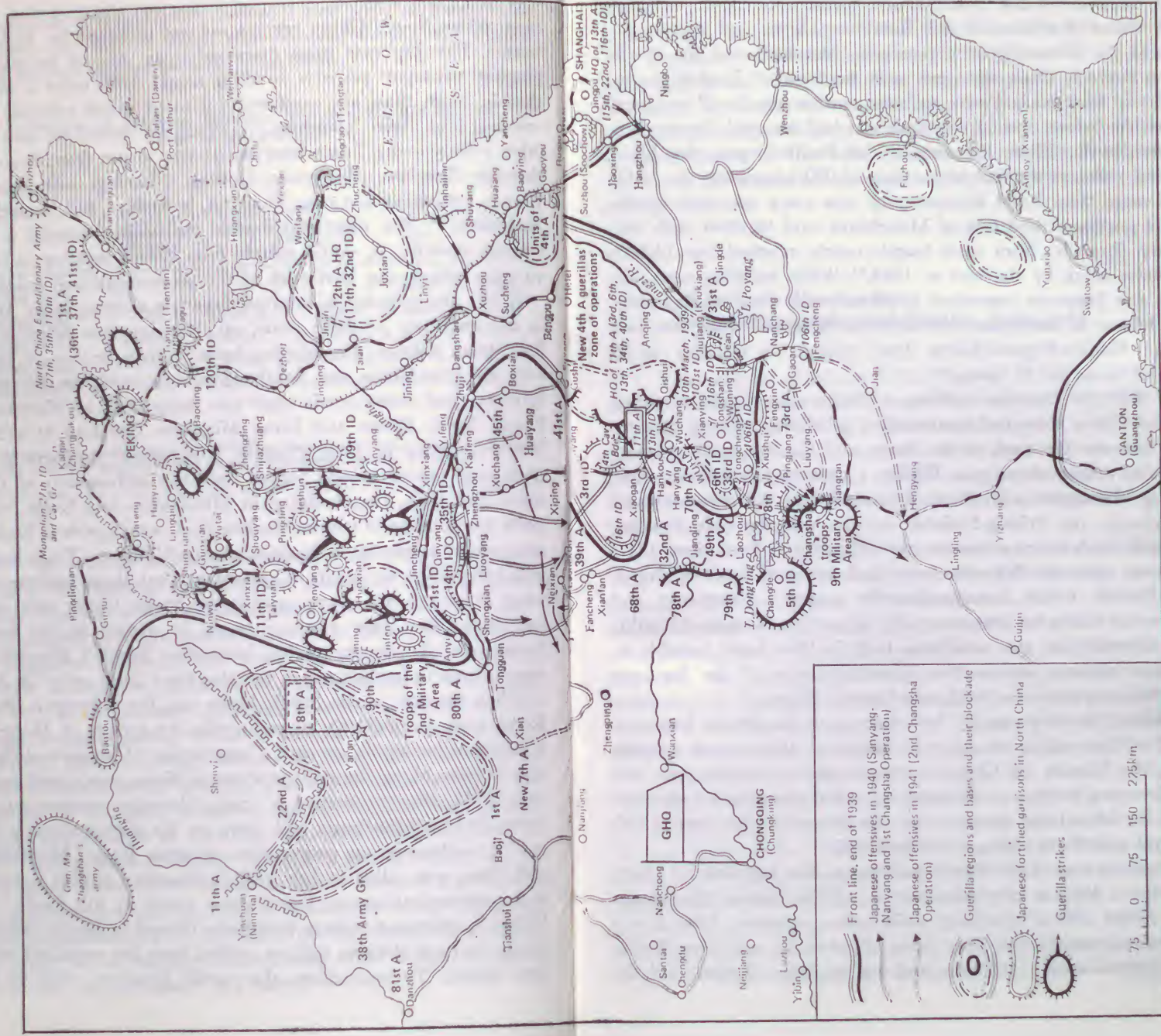
* *Kaigun se gunmukhyaku shiryo*. Tokyo, 1945, p. 32 (only vessels of more than 100 tons displacement with metal hulls were counted here).

With the tonnage of cargo ships and army transports shrinking, as it did from the very first few months of the war in the Pacific, overland communications gained ever increasing importance—notably railways and motor-roads in China, because as the war progressed Japan resorted more and more to the economic resources of countries in East and Southeast Asia. As a result, early in 1943 the Japanese government officially announced that a single transport system would be devised on the mainland. In 1940-1942 Japanese design offices had been busy drawing up various transport system projects. The drafts took account of the needs of the monopoly concerns, but above all of the strategic military requirements of the army and navy. A railway was projected running from Shenyang (Mukden) to the border of Xinjiang across Rehe, Inner Mongolia and Gansu. It was obvious that this project, which ran close to the borders of the Mongolian People's Republic and the southern frontier of the Soviet Union was, above all, a strategic line. Among other things, it was to "close" the "northern door" to China.²⁰

A Shanghai-Singapore transport artery was also projected, running across South China regions not yet occupied by Japanese troops. The Japanese press described it as "one of the world's greatest" transport projects, totalling nearly 5,000 miles in length that is, more than any continental United States railroad, and crossing four Asian countries. It would be second to only one other railway—the Trans-Siberian. It was to run from Shanghai through Zhuzhou, Hengyang, Guilin, Nanning, and Zhenan, French Indochina and then Thailand, to Malaya, finally reaching Singapore.²¹ The men who drafted the project thought it was entirely realistic: it would merely join already existing railways running across the territories of the above-mentioned countries.

It was also planned to improve Japanese shipping lanes. Within the next two or three years, said the Japanese Minister for East Asian Affairs, the shipping lanes joining the Sea of Japan with the East China and South China seas would be improved. Railways and motor-roads were also being built in Manchuria, Korea, North China and Inner Mongolia. Speaking at a New Year's reception in 1942, Premier Tojo assured members of the diplomatic corps, among whom were the ambassadors of Germany and Italy, that building in Manchukuo and Korea, especially the building of communication lines, was capable of backing any sudden exigencies in Japan's defence.²² This was Tojo's way of giving the allied diplomats to understand that Japan had the necessary resources for a war against the Soviet Union and, what was more, that these resources could be massed on the Soviet border and the border of the Mongolian People's Republic at any moment in furtherance of the plan for a "new order" in Asia.

When the war in the Pacific broke out, the railways in North Korea were immediately placed under the control of Mantetsu, a Japanese monopoly concern. Construction of separate stretches of a railway along the eastern shore of Korea was completed in early 1942, thus producing a single Mantetsu communications system linking Manchuria with ports on the eastern shore of Korea. A conference on cooperation between Japan, Manchukuo and China was called in July 1942 in Shanghai to gear transport and communications to Japan's war needs in the Pacific and China. A mainland railway board was formed in Xinjin (Changchun) in June 1943 to tighten control over the mainland transport system. To camouflage the purely Japanese origin of this



Situation in the China Theatre in Mid-1941

body, members of the Manchukuo "government" were included in it, but staff officers of the Kwantung Army and representatives of the Korean governor-general, Mantetsu and the North China Railway Company were more numerous.²³ In due course, the board took control over railway construction in all occupied China. As before, special emphasis was laid on road construction in Manchuria. When the war in the Pacific began, the Manchurian railways totalled more than 11,000 kilometres. In 1942-1943 more than 2,500 kilometres of new track was laid, chiefly in the northwest and east of Manchuria, and together with secondary (branch) lines total length nearly reached the 14,000-kilometre mark by the end of 1943.²⁴ While building new railways, the Japanese command in Manchuria used locally mobilised labour to modernise the old lines. A second track was laid on the Harbin-Pogranichnaya line, raising its capacity to 56 pairs of trains per 24 hours.²⁵

In 1943 the Japanese military administration in the occupied part of China launched construction of direct railway connections between the bank of the Amur and Canton, cutting across China to that southern port. Earlier, a network of roads was built linking Manchuria with North China. Before the occupation of Manchuria, the Peking-Mukden railway was the only link between China's interior regions and Manchuria. Ever since 1937, however, after the Japanese army had over-run much of North and Central China, communications between Manchuria and the rest of China became especially important, because the military-industrial base that was being built in Manchuria, notably its southern regions, became the operational rear of the Japanese expeditionary forces in North and Central China.

Besides, the preparations for war against the Soviet Union in the Far East, which would entail shipment of men and supplies from the interior of China to the northern, northeastern and northwestern borders of Manchuria, called not only for strategic roads in Manchuria proper, but also for roads that would link Central and North China with Manchuria.

After the war in the Pacific had begun, the Japanese set about building a 500-km trans-Manchurian railway linking Manchuria with North China (the Jinzhou-Gubeikou railway). After it was completed, two branch lines were added to it—one from Yixian to Xinlitun station (63 km) and one to Rehe station, and the

other from Yeboshou station to Chifeng (146.8 km). This greatly increased the capacity of the trans-Manchurian trunk line. The expansion of the transport system in China was, of course, intimately linked with the further Japanese plans of turning the conquered territories into a military-industrial base for the war in the Pacific. Special importance was attached to the accelerated development of the military-industrial complex in Manchuria, which the Japanese expected to play a decisive part in their strategic venture.

Accelerated Construction of the Military-Industrial Base in Manchuria

The need to withdraw from the war in China as quickly and as profitably as possible compelled the Japanese government to work out a "new policy", whose main purpose was "to demonstrate Japan's equal, non-discriminatory attitude towards China and to ensure Japan's and China's greater rights and contributions to the economic and cultural development of the 'new order' in Asia".²⁶

On November 5, 1940, the Japanese government published a Basic Ten-Year Programme of Economic Development and Cooperation Between Japan, Manchukuo and China. The *Tokyo Mainichi* wrote that its main idea, rooted in the economic construction of Japan, Manchukuo and China, was the acknowledgment of the common interests of these countries and an appreciation of the need for close cooperation between them in economic development and defence.²⁷ Japan did not conceal its wish to obtain what it needed to wage the war in China, and gave to understand that not only Japan, but also Manchukuo and China were responsible for the progress and outcome of the war (fought in the interests of Japanese monopoly concerns). At the end of December 1941, with the war in the Pacific already underway the Japanese government published a declaration reminding all concerned that "the struggle is far from over, and the peoples and governments of the countries in East and South-east Asia should cooperate actively with the Japanese imperial forces for final victory, and grant Japan the necessary strategic raw

materials, such as iron, copper and aluminium ore, coal and oil as well as foodstuffs and manpower"²⁸.

After the Ministry for East Asian Affairs was set up in November 1942, Kazuo Aoki, the man who headed it, was instructed to work out the principles that would govern the long-term programme of cooperation among states within the East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.²⁹ In fact, however, the Minister's job was to divide Japanese-occupied territories into regions and define zones of economic plunder for the Japanese army. In February 1943, Kazuo Aoki published a plan for cooperation in "building a Greater East Asia", which contained the following provisions:

1. Manchukuo and North China would be the metallurgical centres of the Empire where the coal and iron ore industries would be subject to priority development.

2. Special attention would be paid to the development of the oil industry. The oil industry would be concentrated in Sakhalin, North China, Indonesia, and Hokkaido, while the production of synthetic fuel from shale would be concentrated in Manchuria.

3. Aluminium would be produced in Southeast Asia, namely, the Philippines and Indonesia, as well as in Korea, and in due course, also in North China.

4. To ensure the planned development of the extractive and manufacturing industries in the "co-prosperity" countries of East and Southeast Asia, Japan would undertake to produce industrial equipment and machinery for them. It would also assist in building up the power industry, and specifically, in constructing hydropower stations.³⁰

On the face of it, this plan, which was widely advertised in the Japanese press and in radio broadcasts beamed to countries of Asia, looked attractive. But it betrayed the aim of hitching the economy of East and Southeast Asia to the Japanese Empire, of turning it into a military-industrial arsenal that would back up Japanese imperialism's aggressive plans. And Manchuria was cast in the key place.

In January 1942, Kwantung Army HQ in Manchuria set up an Economic Administration staffed by industrial and agricultural experts shipped in from Japan. Its personnel totalled more than 700 engineers, economists, agronomists, and financial experts, and it was advertised as Japan's "selfless aid to Manchukuo for its

economic and financial development, which will play a decisive role in the overall system of cooperation between Japan, Manchukuo and China in the framework of the East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere".³¹ Japan again professed concern for the economic, political and cultural development of the Asiatic peoples and the wish to liberate them from the "white" Western imperialism, holding up Manchuria as an example.

At that time the Japanese government enacted laws aimed at regulating the economic and political life of Manchuria through the puppet government of Manchukuo. Japanese administrators who, in effect, geared all economic and political matters to the needs of the aggressive war were given strict instructions "to display caution and patience". In May 1942, the Manchukuo "government" lifted state controls over industry (instituted in May 1937), which applied to 21 industries, notably military industries. A new law was adopted which applied to as many as 52 industries. Regulations concerning control over particular industries were issued in furtherance of this law. In July 1942, for example, a law was enacted on control over the activity of export-import agencies and firms engaged in internal trade, private financial enterprises and banks. This was followed in March 1943 by a law establishing control over the manufacture and sale of textiles, metal goods, and paper, and in July 1943 by a law on control over mining.

By the end of 1943, the "government" of Manchukuo (and in fact the HQ of the Japanese Kwantung Army) had established control over mining and over the steel, shipbuilding and engineering industries (including production of internal combustion engines, milling machinery, vehicles, tools, measuring instruments, and electric motors), over the non-ferrous metals industry, and over the production of railway cars, locomotives, automobiles, airplanes, and so on. There were laws regulating the production and sale of building materials, vegetable oil, silk, cloth made of artificial fibre, knitted goods, tinned food, beer, sugar, and a number of other foodstuffs.

In October 1943, the Manchukuo "government" issued a special decree, and then also an appeal to the people, calling for the application within its borders of the Japanese law of February 26, 1938, on the "universal mobilisation of the nation".³² The appeal said, among other things, that the country should

marshal its economic resources and increase shipments of supplies to Japan, and also increase production of materials Japan needed to fight that war; step up cooperation with North China, Korea, and other regions of the continent in order to initiate joint extraordinary wartime measures and to supply each other with necessary raw and other materials.³³

The decree, like the appeal of the puppet Manchukuo government, had been drawn up in Tokyo and showed the increasing reliance of the Japanese government on the Manchurian military-industrial complex and in Manchukuo as a military staging area. The Pu Yi government of that period ranked second after that of Japan in the Japan-Manchukuo-China bloc. Manchuria was to get all requisite raw materials and manpower to ensure greater output of its war industries. It was the seat of the repair industry for Japanese weapons and vehicles put out of action in the battlefields of China and in the Pacific; it also refurbished weapons captured from the enemy.

The author has given an overall picture of industrial development plans for occupied territories published by the Japanese Ministry for East Asian Affairs, in which Manchuria was cast as a centre of the iron and steel industry. But did these Japanese plans ever come true?

Iron ore extraction in Manchuria increased at a fairly considerable rate. It was planned to produce 6.6 million tons of iron ore by 1942. Yet on November 14, 1942, the *Manshu nichinichi* reported that "iron ore extraction has increased 264 per cent over 1937". In 1937, according to official reports, the figure was 2.2 million tons; hence, the 1942 output was 5.7 million. Although this fell 17 per cent short of the plan, Japan and Korea combined produced 6.7 million tons that year. Consequently, Manchuria yielded some 46 per cent of the total iron ore output.³⁴ Still, though the Manchurian increase was considerable, there was not enough ore for the iron and steel industry and something like 1.5 million tons had to be shipped in from North China and North Korea.³⁵

The iron and steel industry in Manchuria had three centres—Anshan, Benxi and Dunbiandao. Under the development plan, annual pig iron output was to be 5 million tons by 1942, and steel output nearly 3.5 million tons.³⁶ When the "first five-year plan for Manchuria's economic development" was drawn up at

the end of 1937, Manchuria produced 750,000 tons of pig iron and 500,000 tons of steel.³⁷ According to official Japanese figures, the output of pig iron in 1942 had increased 219 per cent over 1937³⁸, and the output of steel 154 per cent. Consequently, 2.5 million tons of pig iron, or 50 per cent of planned, was produced in Manchuria in 1942 along with 1.3 million tons of steel. In 1942 and 1943 the Manchurian iron and steel industry accounted for 30-40 per cent of Japan's pig iron output and something like 20 per cent of its steel output.³⁹

In 1942-1944 the Manchurian "national" economy did not need more than 500,000 tons of steel and rolled stock.⁴⁰ Consequently, out of the 1.3 million tons of steel produced in 1942 the Manchurian economy consumed only 38.4 per cent, while the remaining 61.6 per cent went to enterprises controlled by Japanese monopoly concerns and to military-industrial plants in Japan proper. The monopoly right to producing and selling steel and rolled stock belonged to the Japanese-owned Showa Seikoshō company, which adopted the name of Manshu Seiko in 1944 to camouflage its origin. The Manchukuo government, which held 12.3 per cent of its shares, represented "national" Manchurian capital.

By the end of the war the Manchurian iron and steel industry could annually produce 1,960,000 tons of pig iron (five blast furnaces of 700 tons each, one of 500 tons and two of 450 tons each) and 1,330,000 tons of steel (Plant No. 1—two open-hearth furnaces of 150 tons each and four of 100 tons each, and Plant No. 2—six open-hearth furnaces of 150 tons each).⁴¹

The rolling mills, fairly large by the standards of that time, could annually produce 200,000 tons of large sections and 170,000 tons of sheets, 40,000 tons of thin sheets and 150,000 tons of shapes. Considering the techniques used in making Japanese light tanks (the Japanese army had mostly whippet and light tanks), light-duty army lorries, and medium- and small-calibre artillery systems, the iron and steel plants of Manchuria were obviously well able to supply the war industries with rolled stock.

The chief centre of the Manchurian iron and steel industry was the Anshan plant, which produced nearly 80 per cent of the total output in 1943. Something like ten other plants, which processed and chemically synthesised the waste of the metallurgical process, repaired the Anshan plant's equipment and made

building machinery, were set up in its vicinity. The plant also built large experimental blast furnaces. In 1943, for one thing, it began the construction of a furnace designed to produce daily more than 1,000 tons of metal.⁴²

From 1942 on, efforts were made to build up a metallurgical base at Dunbiandao. This was the third base after Anshan and Benxi. An ore-dressing plant was constructed there, and two experimental furnaces of 20 tons each. In early 1943 it yielded the first 15,000 tons of high-quality pig iron.*

But owing to the mounting resistance of the Manchurians, the Japanese failed to carry out the predatory Japan-Manchukuo-China "economic cooperation" programme. As a result, they were compelled to increase shipments of Manchurian pig iron, coke and other semi-finished material for the iron and steel industry in Japan proper. In 1944, the correlation between iron and steel production in Japan, Manchukuo and China was the following (in per cent)⁴³:

	Coke	Pig iron	Steel	Rolled stock
Japan proper	65	59	89	91
Korea	8	9	2	2
Manchuria	27	24	9	7
China	—	8	—	—

There were also other reasons for the decline in Manchuria's output of steel and rolled stock. First, Japan did not have enough equipment for the open-hearth process and the rolling mills. Earlier, this equipment was shipped in from Germany, but ever since the Nazis attacked the Soviet Union German exports

* The Mangyo concern controlled the activity of the Anshan, Benxi and Dunbiandao companies. By 1942 its assets had grown to 2,000 million yen. Its general office was staffed by more than 2,000 Japanese engineers and technicians, and 4,250 office workers and agents who travelled up and down Manchuria in search of new opportunities to plunder raw materials and forcibly enlist manpower. The officers and men of the Japanese Kwantung Army were under orders to apply firearms against the local population at the first request of representatives of the Mangyo concern.

to Manchuria had stopped. Second, there was a shortage of skilled labour for the steel industry, especially the rolling mills. Even the steel plants and rolling mills in Japan proper were over 30 per cent short of workers in early 1943.* Third, owing to the deterioration of the operational situation in the Pacific and to the guerilla war in China, and also to the expansion of the guerilla war in Manchuria, the ferrous and non-ferrous metals monopolies did not want to invest any more in the construction of iron and steel plants and rolling mills in Manchuria. The coke and pig iron produced in Manchuria were shipped to Japan, with nearly all the merchant tonnage belonging to Manchuria and Korea, as well as a considerable percentage of naval transports that were being used for this purpose.

The coal industry in Manchuria was important too. Known deposits of coal there amounted to between 16 billion and 20 billion tons, and mining was cheap because the deposits were close to the surface (and could be extracted by the open-cast method in some places) and labour was exceedingly cheap. Manchurian and Korean coal was also important for Japan because, unlike the Japanese coal which was mostly lignite, it was high-quality anthracite.

Coalmining was controlled by Mantan, a Japanese company with special privileges and backing from the Kwantung Army. By an order of March 11, 1942, all garrison commanding officers in Manchuria were instructed to "assist representatives of the firm in every possible way in mobilising manpower for working in mines, and building mines and warehouses, mobilising means of transport and organising transportation of coal to ports and trans-shipment stations".⁴⁴

At the beginning of 1943 the company was working the Fushun, Fuxin, Hegan, Xi'an, Mishan-Huling and Beipiao coal deposits. In addition, to disguise its predatory nature, "mixed" coal companies were formed, in which, however, Japanese capital predominated all the same. These were, among others, the Shulan (Jilin) Coal Company, the Hanchong (Tonghua and Jjiangdao) Coal Company, and the Muling Coal Company. Their

* Despite the hostilities in the Pacific, the Japanese government decided on February 17, 1943, to recall steelworkers from the expeditionary army in China.

assets at the beginning of 1943 totalled 125 million yen, out of which 78.6 million belonged to Japanese shareholders.⁴⁵ In March 1943 another company was formed to make coal-dust briquettes for industrial use, in which 50 per cent of the shares were sold to Manchurian investors.

Joint efforts by the monopoly concerns and Kwantung Army HQ pushed up coal output in Manchuria to more than 30 million tons by the end of 1943.⁴⁶ Considering that the finalised plan for Manchukuo's economic development provided for an output of 31,110,000 tons of coal by 1941, Manchuria did not come close to attaining that level by the end of 1943. The coal was used mainly in Manchuria itself. Dressed coal or coke was shipped to Japan. By the end of 1943, some 6 million tons of coal had been shipped out of Manchuria.⁴⁷

Coal mined in Manchuria was neither sold nor allocated without the permission of Kwantung Army HQ. Most of it went to the military authorities and the iron and steel plants. Forced labour was used in the mines. It was put at the disposal of mine managers or chiefs. Out of the 910,000 workers abducted from North China in 1941, more than 600,000 were sent to work or build mines, and out of the 800,000 that were to be shipped in in 1943, more than half were to go to the coal mines.⁴⁸

Owing to mass flight from mines and mining areas, however, the labour mobilisation plans of the Japanese concerns were never fully met. The Manchukuo "government", complying with the demand of the Kwantung Army, enacted a law on January 1, 1943, providing for "labour service to the state". The law said its main purpose was, "first, to marshal the manpower required for defence building and the heavy industry in order to ensure the victorious completion of the construction of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, and, second, to educate young people through labour in the spirit of the state's main ideas, and to develop personnel that is firm in spirit and strong in body as an example of the good organisation and activity of the masses in Manchukuo."⁴⁹

Under this law all able-bodied males of 21 to 23 not serving in the army were obliged to work "for the state", that is, do free work for the Japanese occupation forces four months yearly in the course of three years. Later in 1943, other laws were passed requiring senior schoolchildren and students of institutes

and colleges to do forced labour. They constituted the "labour army" of Manchukuo. On the strength of these laws, 120,000 labourers were to be put to work in 1943, 250,000 in 1944, and 400,000 in 1945.⁵⁰ A large part of this workforce was placed at the disposal of the Mantan concern to work and build mines.

Still, despite all these measures, Manchuria's coal output declined. To what extent may be seen from the figures for the Fushun coal basin. By the beginning of 1944, output there dropped from 10 million to 6.5 million tons, by the end of that year to 5 million tons, and by August 1945 to 4.5 million tons.⁵¹

After the outbreak of the war in the Pacific, owing to the considerably greater production of aircraft, marine navigational appliances, communications appliances, control instruments and other sophisticated items, Japan's military industry experienced a great shortage of non-ferrous metals.

In April 1942, the Manchukuo "government" passed a law on "bonuses" to companies extracting manganese and sulphur, and in May 1942 also to companies extracting lead, zinc, aluminium and copper ores. As a result, the 1943 output of non-ferrous metals increased 16.4 per cent over 1942.⁵² Another law established strict regulation of private consumption of non-ferrous metals; it provided for fines of up to 1,000 yuan for the first breach of its stipulation and imprisonment under articles on "wartime offences" for the second breach, with the prospect of a fairly long prison term.⁵³ The Kwantung Army itself controlled copper-ore mining most strictly (by 1942 all production of cartridges, shells, and other wartime items requiring copper was put under its special supervision). Along with the general law regulating private consumption of non-ferrous metals, another law was passed on April 1, 1942, prohibiting use of copper and copper alloys in building and in civilian production. Traders were strictly forbidden to sell goods made of copper and copper alloys.⁵⁴

In May 1942 the Manchukuo "government" allocated 28 million yuan to the Mangyo concern for copper ore prospecting.⁵⁵ In 1942 and 1943 the prospectors* discovered a number of new copper ore deposits (in Jilin, Andong, Tonghua, etc.).⁵⁶ Mining of copper ore was considerably increased in the old mines, those of Fuzhong, Huadong, and others.⁵⁷

* The prospecting teams were guarded by Japanese soldiers. As many as 2,230 officers and men had been assigned to such guard duty.

According to Japanese figures, 3,900 tons of copper was produced in Manchuria by the end of 1943, with 65 per cent of it being used locally by the military-industrial complex, and the rest shipped to Japan.⁵⁸

The Manchurian output of lead, zinc and aluminium is given in the table below (in tons):⁵⁹

	1937	1941	1943	1945
Lead	1,900	3,800	11,230	14,018
Zinc	2,200	3,666	6,746	7,800
Aluminium	—	8,030	8,441	10,102

The greater output of ferrous and non-ferrous metals and the increasing production of the war industries necessitated expanding the power industry. Thermal power stations were the prevalent source of power until 1941. In the years that followed, Japanese monopoly concerns boosted the power output through the use of the Manchurian rivers. The first hydropower station was put into operation on the Yalu in May 1941, the second on Lake Jinbo in December 1942, and the third on the Sungari in March 1943.⁶⁰ Let us note by way of comparison that the Manchurian power industry expanded 285 per cent, from 1,350,500 kw in 1936 to 3,860,800 in 1943.⁶¹ But further construction was suspended owing to the absence of heavy power-generating equipment, which had earlier been supplied by Germany.⁶² Manshu dangyo, a daughter company of the Mangyo concern, built and operated most of the power stations in Manchuria. It accounted for 2.2 million kw, while the rest was owned by Mantetsu, Mantan, and the Showa plants in Anshan.

Much effort was spent on building up the synthetic fuel and lubricants industry working on Manchurian shale. By 1941 plants making synthetic fuel were concentrated at Fushun, Siping, Jinzhou, Jilin and Shenyang. Their total annual fuel output was rated at 870,000 tons, and output of lubricants at about 150,000 tons.⁶³ It follows that overall the plants were designed to produce more than 1 million tons of the badly needed

fuel and lubricants. By official Kwantung Army reports, however, actual fuel output in 1943 amounted to 67.3 per cent, and of lubricants to 42 per cent, of the above figures.⁶⁴ The Japanese authorities were forced to admit that owing to technological faults and the absence of essential equipment, the production plan for Manchurian fuel and lubricants could not be fulfilled as desired.

In 1941 to 1943 this led to the appearance of numerous regulations, orders and laws forbidding civilian consumption of fuel and lubricants. Special workshops were set up in the bigger towns and in Japanese garrisons, which altered car engines to run on simpler types of fuel—firewood and charcoal.

Owing to the limitations of the food industry in Japan proper, especially in wartime, the authorities counted on food supplies from Manchuria, whose agriculture had many untapped possibilities. Before the outbreak of the war in the Pacific, the Japanese army requisitioned food and agricultural raw materials from Manchurian farms without control, supplying itself out of local resources and shipping a considerable part of the requisitioned products to Japan.

From 1942 on, the plunder of food resources and agricultural raw materials took on new forms. It was disguised as "concern for the further development of agriculture in Manchukuo".⁶⁵ The Japanese press in Manchuria publicised a plan for developing 8,200,000 hectares of virgin lands and water meadows, which, together with the already cultivated area and given an increase in yields, was to push up food crops from 18 million tons to something like 50 million tons in a matter of ten years, that is, by 1952. Japanese propaganda promised that with the aid and cooperation of Japanese experts Manchuria would attain a high standard of farming. Fifteen new varieties of beans, seven of wheat, and 14 of rice were to be introduced, and new varieties of cotton, tobacco, flax and hemp, as well as other industrial crops, were to be developed.

In March 1942, the Manchukuo "government" set up a Ministry of Agricultural Development staffed by 712 office workers and specialists of whom 546 were Japanese mobilised by the government to serve in Manchuria. In June 1942, at a special conference in Xinjin, the new ministry discussed ways and means of increasing farm output and expanding exports to Japan. The

Kyowakai Society, a fascist-minded nationalist mass organisation, was enlisted to build up a movement promoting agriculture as a step closer to the "new order" in East Asia. A Kyowakai congress was called in 1943 to discuss agricultural problems, attended by more than 200 delegates from various provinces.

But behind this organisational hullabaloo stood the Manshu nonsan kosha (Manchurian Agricultural Company), headed by a Japanese, Seitaro Yuki, a former Manchukuo Vice-Minister of Agriculture, who had all the facts and figures about the state and potentialities of Manchurian agriculture at his fingertips. In 1942 and 1943 Japanese subsidiary companies were formed to promote silk and tobacco output—Manshu sakko (Manchurian Silkworm Cultivation Company), Manshu tabako (Manchurian Tobacco Company), and others.

In June 1943, the Agricultural Bank of Manchukuo was constituted to finance agricultural development. That year, 450,000 hectares of water meadows along the Sungari and Mudanjiang were developed with its financial backing (against 500,000 hectares as planned). The improved land was mostly allotted to Japanese colonists, a few thousand hectares to Japanese land improvement parties, and some to factory plots for fruit and vegetable farms supplying settlements of Japanese factory workers and office employees.

The Manchurian peasants, who knew from bitter experience that anything the Japanese or the puppet authorities happened to undertake served the colonial aims of the Japanese Empire, showed little or no interest in the appeals to develop virgin lands, increase harvests, or help increase food resources.

Following instructions from Tokyo, the Manchukuo "government" introduced a strict system of control over the production and consumption of farm products in 1942. This amounted to planning the area and type of sowing, and advance purchasing of harvests (that is, organised requisitioning of harvests in favour of the "state") for each province, prefecture, county and village, and, consequently, for each peasant farm. In 1942, as a guarantee of sale, the farmer was paid in advance (one yuan per 10 jing, with one jing equalling 500 grams). The sum was nothing less than miserly. Low monopoly prices were set, and the farmer could not freely buy the requisite amount of seed for the next year, let alone agricultural implements. Owing to the

exceedingly high cost of grade seed, to say nothing of agricultural machines, the advance payment could not cover purchases. Besides, the output of agricultural machines, even of plain farm implements, had all but come to a standstill owing to the strict regulation of metal consumption. The seed, too, was strictly controlled, so that the peasant was made to grow only those crops that Japan needed. From 1942 on, to improve control over the harvest, the Japanese authorities in Manchuria used the Kyowakai Society to campaign for "collective" farms, "model villages", "experimental farms", and "exemplary communities". All this amounted to a system of peasants' mutual responsibility for fulfilling the orders of the Japanese authorities. It was so much easier to requisition produce from "collective" farms than from individual homesteads.

But here, too, the Japanese encountered strong resistance. It turned out that a "collective" farm consisting of several homesteads, a "model village" or "exemplary community", were convenient for guerilla, who contacted them, received the necessary food, and left behind "receipts" stating that it had been requisitioned for the struggle against the invaders. Fearing reprisals, peasants abandoned their villages and went to the guerilla areas and bases. Early in 1943, the Japanese authorities tried to institute a new type of aid to agriculture—to establish "revival villages", that is, to set up with government subsidies villages of farm labourers working exclusively for Japanese procurers. The latter provided the seed and the implements, and then requisitioned the entire harvest. Usually, a kulak or a petty landlord, who was given a fairly large plot of arable for private use and served the Japanese faithfully in return, was put at the head of such "revival villages".

All "agricultural development" was thus aimed at creating an administrative and economic system that would facilitate the requisitioning of food products.

The resistance of the peasants, however, frustrated all plans for expanding crop areas and increasing harvests.

Still, by the end of 1944, despite the decline in crop areas and harvests, especially of grain, Manchuria covered the needs not only of the Japanese army and civilians in Manchuria, but also yielded surpluses for shipment to Japan. The food requisitioning was handled by the logistical service of the Kwantung

Army which had detachments of troops and gendarmes at its disposal, as well as vehicles to transport the requisitioned food from the Manchurian countryside.

Japan's Economic Policy in North China in 1942-1943

On September 28, 1941, General Hata, commander of Japanese troops in China, reporting to the Emperor and the High Command Council on the hostilities in China, stressed that although the 8th Route and New 4th armies were not particularly active, they obstructed the imperial army's manoeuvring, destroyed communication lines linking North and Central China with Manchuria, and hampered shipments of goods to Japan and to the war theatre in the Pacific.

Hata noted specially that the resistance north and east of the Huanghe and in the territory up to the Great Wall of China was significant not only militarily but also politically. Here, he said, in areas blockaded by Japanese and Chinese troops, a "third Chinese empire" was arising under communist leadership. The influence of this "third empire" was increasing and spreading to territories administered by the Nanking or Chongqing governments.*⁶⁶ But the High Command Council refused to step up military operations in China. The war in the Pacific required the earliest possible settlement of the "China Incident", preferably by peaceful means, and doubly so because Japan had a big stake in China's economic potentialities.

In a setting of extreme tension in North and Central China, with the mass of the people joining the active armed anti-Japanese struggle under communist leadership, the Japanese were compelled to manoeuvre, to disguise their rapacious policy of plunder, to pretend that they wanted cooperation with the "national government" in Nanking, and with the Chinese compradore bourgeoisie. An economic conference convened in Tokyo by the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was meant, among other things, to verify the effects of

* General Hata meant that apart from the "third empire" of the Communists there were the "first empire" under Wang Jingwei in Nanking, and the "second empire" under Chiang Kaishek in Chongqing

the law of November 7, 1938, adopted by the 73rd session of the Japanese Diet on the founding and activity of the North China Economic Development Company.*

By September 1941, the company's stated capital amounted to 350 million yen (175 million treasure capital and 175 million private capital). The private companies with shares in the North China Economic Development Company included such major concerns as Mantetsu, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo kinzoku, Sumitomo shoji, Mitsui Koza and Mitsui Bussan.⁶⁷

The company was to invest chiefly in agriculture and mining (cotton, wheat, soya beans, wool, leather and hides, meat, as well as coal, iron ore, manganese, aluminium, lead, zinc and copper ore, their concentrates, etc.). But the situation compelled it to invest most of its funds in the infrastructure (construction and improvement of railways and motor-roads, ports and jetties, power stations and power transmission lines). Out of the total investment of 1,423 million yen, nearly two-thirds went into the infrastructure, that is, industries servicing the Japanese occupation army.

As from 1941, a large assortment of subsidiaries were put into operation, such as the North China Company for the Development of Communications (Kaboku kotsu), the North China Power and Communications Company (Kaboku den-den), the North China Cotton Cultivation Company (Kaboku menka), the

* In official documents of the Japanese command issued in North China the company was named Kaboku keizai kaihatsu Kaisha, that is, the North China Economic Development Company. But sometimes it was also called the Kaboku keizai sambo-honbu, that is, General Headquarters of the North China Economy (see Hirosaku Shimada, *Jikoku moto-no Mitsui, Mitsubishi sohasen*, Tokyo, 1940, p. 8). The law of November 7, 1938, provided for the following:

1) Companies with shares in Kaboku keizai kaihatsu Kaisha shall be relieved of all taxes for ten years from the day of the establishment of the company; 2) each shareholder shall receive an annual government grant amounting to one-sixth of his investment; 3) government credits shall be issued on easy terms for five years from the day of the commissioning of the enterprise or mine; 4) the company's stated capital may be five times the invested capital, and shares may be sold for this sum; 5) the nominal value of the shares is guaranteed by the government; 6) the nominal value of the shares must not be lower than one-sixth of the stated value, for this nominal value is guaranteed by the government (see *Senji moto-no kokusaku kaisha*, Tokyo, 1940, p. 558).

North China Salt Company (Kaboku engyo), and the United Bank for the Development of China (Kaboku rengo kaiatsu ginko).⁶⁸

To portray its economic expansion as cooperation with the Chinese bourgeoisie and the Nanking "national" government, the Japanese authorities announced that the subsidiaries of the Kaboku keizai kaiatsu would attract Chinese government and private capital, which may amount to 50 per cent of the stated and one-third of the actually invested capital.⁶⁹

Eighteen mixed subsidiaries with a capital of 585 million yen were established by the end of 1941, with 252.7 million belonging to shareholders of the Kaboku keizai kaiatsu, and 189.5 million to other private and mixed (government-private) Japanese companies, and only 142.8 million yen, or less than 24.5 per cent, to so-called Chinese national investors, many of whom were mere figureheads who, for a remuneration, represented their masters—Japanese monopolies.⁷⁰

In 1942, the Japanese press gave much publicity to the participation of "state" (Wang Jingwei) capital in such companies as the Kaboku denshin denwa, Kaboku kotsu, Kaboku engyo, Kaboku banto tetsugyo, and Kaboku menka. Actually, the share of Chinese "national government capital" in these companies was insignificant (see table below).

Assets of Mixed Companies in North China
(000 yen)*

	Total stated capital	Including		
		head compa- ny (Kaboku keizai kai- atsu)	other Japa- nese companies	Chinese nation- al "govern- ment" and private capi- tal
Kaboku denshin denwa	35,000	13,000	14,000	8,000
Kaboku kotsu	300,000	150,000	120,000	30,000
Kaboku engyo	25,000	18,000	—	7,000
Kaboku banto tetsugyo	5,000	2,500	—	2,500
Kaboku menka	100,000	48,000	48,000	4,000

* *Senji moto-no hokusaku haisha*, pp. 566-67.

The Japanese companies brutally exploited the Chinese work-force. The activity of the Japanese Kaboku rodo kyokai (North China Manpower Company) angered even pro-Japanese elements in Nanking. Its agents accompanied the Japanese and Wang Jingwei armies on their punitive expeditions and forcibly drove away thousands of Chinese for work in mines and building roads in North China and Manchuria. Some 113,000 workers were thus put to work in Japanese coalmines in North China in just the four months of November 1941 to February 1942. They were made to work as "captives", without payment. As a result of hardships and privations more than 10,000 workers died or were maimed by May 1942. Despite a system of guards, many workers managed to escape from the mines, and more than 4,000 were released from the mines of Zhongxing and Qingxing (near Peking) by raiding guerillas.⁷¹

Kaboku rodo kyokai "shanghaied" more than 60,000 Chinese workers for a railway construction project in North and Central China and Inner Mongolia.⁷² More than 100,000 Chinese workers were forcibly enlisted to repair and build highways and gravel roads in 1942. I might add that many generals and officers of the Japanese expeditionary and Nanking puppet armies were unofficial shareholders of Kaboku rodo kyokai. In addition to dividends, they were paid for every pair of hands supplied to Japanese companies working the riches of China.⁷³ Especially big payments were pocketed by the chiefs of garrisons in the ports of Jingwandao, Tianjing, Tagu, Chifu, Weihaiwei, Longkou, Qingdao and Lianyun. In addition to dividends, they were paid additionally for supplying coolies to work in the ports.⁷⁴ Owing to the war in the Pacific, indeed, the ports in East and Southeast China had gained in importance. Early in January 1942, the Japanese government allocated 82 million yen, as well as building materials, to the Kaboku kotsu and Kaboku yuso companies to double the capacity of Chinese ports by 1945. The ports of Tagu, Qingdao and Lianyun were to be greatly expanded. The port of Tagu, for example, was to handle 7.5 million tons of cargo in 1943, and as much as 27 million in 1946, and the port of Lianyun 10.5 million and 18 million tons respectively.⁷⁵

Japan's Policy in Inner Mongolia

On instructions from Tokyo, the Japanese command in North China sought to "shut off the northern approaches to China", that is, to cut communications between the Soviet Union and China by armed force. To at least externally observe the terms of the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact of April 13, 1941, the Japanese government ascribed actions aimed against the Soviet Union and the Mongolian People's Republic, to the anti-communist "government" of Inner Mongolia.* The puppet government had nominal power over the provinces of Rehe (Jehol) and Chahaer (ten counties), the northern part of Shanxi Province (13 counties)**, six hoshuns of Wulanchobu aimak, 10 hoshuns of Silinguol aimak, 8 hoshuns of Chahaer aimak, 5 hoshuns of Bayanotal aimak, 7 hoshuns of Yikedzhao aimak, and the towns of Kuku-khoto and Baotou (all in all 23 counties, 36 hoshuns and 2 towns with a total area of more than 466,000 sq km, or nearly 100,000 sq km more than the territory of Japan proper). This "united Mongolian state" was headed by Demching Donrov (Prince Dewang), with General Li Shouxing as vice-ruler.

Japanese statesmen and generals declared that Manchukuo, North China and the Mongolian territory constituted an anticommunist zone. "Since the Mongolian territory is a forward area in the struggle against communism", they said,

* Formed on September 1, 1939, out of three earlier constituted "autonomous governments". On September 10, the town of Kalgan was proclaimed the capital of the "new united Mongolian state", Mengjiang. Formally, Mengjiang was an "independent state" which had "diplomatic" relations with Japan, Manchukuo, and the Wang Jingwei government in Nanking. All the same, it was a product of Japanese imperialism, and was nothing more than its obedient puppet. Top posts at the centre and locally were distributed among Mongolians and Chinese "faithful" to Japan. Actual guidance was exercised by Japan's Ministry for East Asiatic Affairs through a system of Japanese advisers.

** The incorporation of 23 North China counties in Inner Mongolia was important for Japan politically. By provoking national strife between Mongolians and Chinese, Japan made sure that it had a pretext for armed intervention.

"the Japanese influence there must be absolute, and therefore Japanese troops must be stationed there."⁷⁶ The stationing of Japanese garrisons, establishment of a local puppet army, and the building of fortifications and roads—all this was described as a response to the threat of "red influence spreading to Mongolia and China". The anti-Soviet and anticommunist designs that Japan nourished in Inner Mongolia were obvious. But as Japan's strategic situation in the war in the Pacific deteriorated, and difficulties piled up with supplies for its armed forces, the Japanese government laid an ever greater accent on economic plunder rather than military use of the Mongolian territory.

On January 12, 1942, an earlier directive to chiefs of Japanese garrisons in Inner Mongolia that they should "obtain their own food and set up local repair shops for the army" was supplemented with an "explanation" to the effect that "the Empire has come to a crossroads in settling exceedingly vital problems, and the Mongolian territory must contribute its share along with Manchukuo and China to the events in East Asia".⁷⁷

On the basis of this "explanation", the Economic Committee of Inner Mongolia, in which Japanese advisers played first fiddle, began a more organised plunder of agricultural raw materials and animal products in the region. The Japanese government released funds to expand studies of the resources of Inner Mongolia. In Zhangjiakou (Kalgan), where a Central Agricultural Institute was founded in 1940, and also in the agricultural institutes of Xuanhua and Datung, hundreds of Japanese experts led by Professor Tada of Tokyo University studied opportunities for more intensive farming and animal husbandry, and the advisability of Japanese investments in these fields.⁷⁸ An expedition under Prof. Tomita looked into the chances of expanding cultivated areas, including rice fields, in the Huanghe Valley. It recommended expanding areas under rice at Baotou, Salaqi and Pingdiquan, cultivating rice fields at Yuxian, Huaiyan, Huailai and Xuanhua, and turning up 18,400 hectares of new land in Shouxiang (North Shanxi). It also recommended a plan for intensifying vegetable and fruit farming, and poultry farming, in 1941 to 1945.⁷⁹

Small and medium Japanese investors came to Inner Mongolia from Japan and Manchuria on the promise of government



China War Theatre in 1942-1943

subsidies amounting to one-third of their own capital for participating in the intensification of food and fodder farming there.⁸⁰ The Toa tabako and Hokushi tabako companies, too, received 7.8 million yen from the government for cultivating tobacco plantations and processing tobacco at a new plant in Zhangjiakou.⁸¹ All in all, government incentives to Japanese companies in Inner Mongolia from 1941 to 1943 totalled 36.5 million yen.⁸²

In July 1942, a large group of Japanese "businessmen" of the Mangyo concern, accompanied by advisers and industrial experts, arrived in Zhangjiakou. The time had come to tap additional reserves created by the close cooperation of Manchukuo, Inner Mongolia and North China under the Japanese-sponsored plan for mobilising production and resources in the construction of Greater East Asia.⁸³ The Mangyo concern wanted to use the industrial raw materials available in Inner Mongolia, including the quite considerable prospected coal deposits, chiefly at Datung, Xiahuayuan and Daqingshan. Coal deposits in the Datung area alone were estimated at 40,000 million tons, that is, fifty times those in Fushun. In the northern counties of Shanxi Province, coal deposits were estimated to be 27 times greater than in all Manchuria.⁸⁴

Japanese experts found that by 1943 Inner Mongolia would yield 10 million tons of coal, and by 1949 as much as 30 million tons. Most of it would go by rail from Datung to Tagu, for, by their estimates, the Datung-Tagu railway would be able to haul 26 million tons annually by 1949, with its modernisation, including construction of sidings from coalmines, completed by 1944. Mixed companies under whose signboard Japanese capital seized control of Inner Mongolia's natural wealth were established on the model of those in North China. The iron ore mines in Lungyan, the graphite deposits in Xinghe and the asbestos of the Salaqi area, like the deposits of mica in the Guancong and Hongshab areas, in effect became the property of Mantetsu subsidiaries. In 1943, the share of the Mongolian "government" in their assets of 630 million yen was just 83 million or 13.2 per cent.⁸⁵

In August 1942, to combat "the widespread feeling that Mongolian autonomy was no more than symbolic", Tokyo sent instructions to "transfer" control over economic development to the "government" of Inner Mongolia. In its wake came a solemn ceremony in which the Bank of Mongolia (Moko ginko) was

granted a 70 million yen credits, and the announcement of the founding of "national-private" companies. A Mongolian electrical company (Moko dengyo) was formed, the Datung coal company (Datun tanko) was "reorganised", and Mantetsu operations were concealed under the signboard of the Lungyan iron-making company (Lunyan tekko). Postal and communication services were made a monopoly of the state, and a company was founded to control them (Moko Tsushin). Last but not least, it was announced that government capital in crop farming and animal husbandry would amount to not less than 50 per cent.⁸⁶

What the Inner Mongolian "government's" share in the economic development projects really amounted to, however, may be seen from the following example. Out of the Datun tanko's stated assets of 40 million yen the "government" of Inner Mongolia "owned" 20 million; its share in the North China Economic Development Company was 10 million yen, and in Mantetsu also 10 million yen. At first glance, the Tokyo directive had been carried out: the "government" of Inner Mongolia had 50 per cent of the company's shares. But 27 million out of the 40 million yen worth of Datun tanko assets were credits specially granted by the Mongolian Bank—controlled by the Federal Bank of North China and the Japanese Bank of Formosa, both of which were actually the owners of the Mongolian Bank.⁸⁷ The share capital of Moko dengyo was 18 million yen, out of which 4.5 million belonged to the North China Economic Development Company, 4.5 million to the Japanese Toa denryoku kigyo company, 3.6 million to the Mongolian Bank, and 5.4 million to the "government" of Inner Mongolia.⁸⁸

Foreign trade, nominally a state monopoly, was in effect, wholly controlled by Japanese trading firms (in 1942 they accounted for 96.2 per cent of imports and 97.1 per cent of exports).⁸⁹ Inner Mongolian raw leather, foods, metals, livestock, and other items went to Manchuria and Japan, and partly to the Japanese army in China and the Pacific.

Changes in Japan's Central China Occupation Policy

Owing to the war situation, the "military and political pacification" programme in Central China was confined chiefly to the big coastal cities—Shanghai, Hangzhou and Wenzhou—and the Yangzi ports of Anqing, Nanchang, Jiujiang (Kiukiang), Hankou, Wuhan, Hanyang, etc.

In 1941-1943, the Japanese military authorities concentrated on propaganda and on marshalling pro-Japanese elements from among the Guomindang right wingers, big compradores, and bourgeois intellectuals.

On January 16, 1941, the garrison chiefs in Nanking, Shanghai, Hangzhou and Wuhan (Hankou, Wuchang and Hanuag), on instructions from Tokyo, issued a "notice" permitting local "national" authorities to sponsor volunteer organisations aiding the imperial army in maintaining public order. The same "notice" permitted the establishment (with "proper registration") of anticommunist cultural and educational societies. In March 1942, anticommunist societies were allowed to have club houses and sports centres, and to send propaganda teams to villages. To each such team the Japanese military authorities assigned specially trained instructors, with transport facilities, stocks of anticommunist literature, photo and cine cameras, etc.* In effect, these mixed propaganda teams were an instrument of the Japanese command.

The Japanese monopolies in Central China were chiefly engaged in commerce. They controlled small and medium-sized enterprises of the light and food industries and had a tight grip on the "black market", to which foreign exchange and goods were channelled out of "booty" seized from Chinese and foreign owners by the imperial army.

At the same time, seeing the increasing economic difficulties in Japan proper, caused by the war in the Pacific, monopoly con-

* An order received by propaganda team No. 87, which was to call at a village in Lishui county 50 km southeast of Nanking, said it was being sent to "carry out planned mobilisation of the morale of the local population".

cerns collaborating with the army and under guard of the garrisons, sought to ship out everything the imperial army had not yet plundered, doing so under cover of "friendly agreements" with local pro-Japanese authorities and the Chinese bourgeoisie.

Japanese-backed companies such as the Mianshan Iron Ore Company (Bockuchu tetsugyo), the Chongnan Coalmining Company, the Central China Salt Company, the Central China Silk Yarn Company, and the Central China Chemical Company, were engaged in "mobilising" national capital. Unlike the "mixed" companies in North China and Inner Mongolia, here the Japanese urged the Chinese national bourgeoisie to underwrite two-thirds of the total capital.* This was due to Japanese fears of investing in enterprises near the war fronts, on the one hand, and, on the other, the wish to show that "business had not stopped" with the coming of the Japanese army, that the Japanese military authorities were creating favourable conditions for national capital, and that the Japanese monopoly concerns were ready and willing to cooperate with Chinese national capital.

The production of the companies in question went to the Japanese all the same. And the attempts to increase output of ore and coal in this way, and that of other items, yielded no results. It had been planned, for example, to raise the iron ore output to 500,000 tons by 1942, but according to figures released by the Mianshan Iron Ore Company, output of its operative four subsidiaries totalled about 120,000 tons because it was impossible to ship in new mining equipment, because there was a shortage of labour and because of the frequent stoppages caused by the menacing situation.⁹⁰ And despite all efforts of the Chongnan Coal Mining Company, coal output in 1941 amounted to a mere 800,000 tons.**

* Out of the Mianshan Iron Ore Company's assets of 20 million yen, Chinese interests owned more than 10 million as of March 1942, while out of the Chongnan Coalmining Company's assets of 10.5 million yen, private Chinese investors controlled 9 million. (See *Senji moto-no kokusaku kaisha*, pp. 673, 674, 677.)

** All the coal was shipped out by military units for needs of the occupation army. Even miners' settlements near the coalmines received no coal. On the "black market" a ton of coal cost 200-300 yuan, while a miner's monthly wage was at most 40 to 45 yuan (see *Senji moto-no kokusaku kaisha*, p. 681).

Chapter 4

The Situation on the Chinese Front in 1942-1943

After General Tojo took over as prime minister, the Liaison Committee, at a meeting on November 15, 1941, adopted the "principles of warfare against the United States, Britain and the Netherlands and of completing the war against Chiang Kaishek". These "principles" emphasised that Japan's main enemy was the United States and that the main war effort was therefore to be directed against the Americans. This meant that the execution of the plan for "completing the war" in China depended on the relations between Chiang Kaishek and the United States. As for the relations between Chiang Kaishek and Britain, their future in the opinion of the Liaison Committee, was "entirely in the hands of Germany, since the preparations for the destruction of Britain are in full course". Chiang Kaishek, who was hostile to both the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of China, could rely on the United States alone as his main and only ally in Asia. The Liaison Committee held that the most vigorous measures must be taken to "discourage Chiang Kaishek from forming an alliance with the United States" and to dispose him in favour of a political alliance with Japan. The committee thought that this could be achieved in two ways: by striking at US positions in the Pacific, which would prove the ability of the Empire to defeat an enemy as strong as the United States, and by "isolating China from the USSR both physically and morally"¹. To achieve such isolation the members of the committee decided upon measures to pin down the Soviet armed forces on the Manchurian border. By doing so Japan intended to help its fascist allies in Europe and at the same time hoped that blows struck at the Red Army in the west would prevent the USSR from maintaining its political and military ties with China at the

prewar level. The committee also showed its resolve to prevent the United States from delivering weapons and war materiel to China and the USSR by sea.

Japan's Military Operations in China in 1942-1943

At the Liaison Committee meeting and at the one held on November 21, the Minister of War reported on the situation on the Soviet-German front, saying that the German ambassador was "well informed about the preparations for a final assault on the capital of the USSR, after which the Russian campaign will be brought to a close". Meanwhile, preparations were underway for a "peace offensive" on Chongqing (Chungking). The Japanese were so preoccupied with the idea of ending the China war that they somehow overlooked the significance of the crushing defeat of the Nazi troops at the approaches to Moscow in December 1941. On December 24, the Emperor's General Headquarters gave its own assessment of the "military events near Moscow" as a routine episode typical of any major war, "which will turn in Germany's favour soon"². With this assessment in view and "considering the situation as it stands", it was decided "to take resolute steps with regard to Chongqing"³. This implied bringing fresh diplomatic and military pressure to bear upon Chiang Kaishek in order to achieve an armistice in China. As a first step, the Japanese sent a schooner, the *Dajung*, on a trip from the Shanghai area up the Yangzi in November 1941. On board was a group of Chinese "businessmen" handpicked by the Japanese, who had ostensibly been in correspondence with their "relatives and friends" in Nanchang, Changsha, Chongqing and Chengdu. On the face of it their mission was to examine the condition of the factories and their equipment, which had been evacuated to the south-west and most of which belonged to the passengers of the *Dajung*. The actual purpose of this trip, which was kept secret, was to establish links with the Chongqing's representatives and to set the stage for separate talks between them and Tokyo.

One of the passengers travelling incognito was Colonel Taro Kawabe, Chief of the Second Department of the Headquarters

of the Japanese expeditionary army in Central China, who in fact was the head of the "peace mission" and who was under orders to "establish contact with the government and the central headquarters in Chongqing."^{*}

The Nanking (Nanjing) regime knew about the mission of the *Dajung*. Wang Jingwei and his entourage had been advised by Tokyo to stop all anti-Chiang Kaishek propaganda and move towards the position of the other side on China's future as Japan's partner. On December 17, 1941, Wang Jingwei declared at a meeting of the Shanghai business community that the Guomintang (Kuemintang) in Chongqing enjoyed the sympathetic support of Free China and hoped that it would act with discretion. No policy could be more unrealistic than that of rejecting collaboration with Japan and Manchukuo⁴ (Manzhouguo). Wang Jingwei's statement made after the inauguration of the "government" in Nanking, drew a corresponding response in Chongqing. Speaking at a meeting of top-ranking officials of the Central Headquarters in Chongqing on December 25, 1941, He Yingqing, who was both Chief of General Staff and War Minister, said Nanking was most likely aware of the complexity of the situation in China created by Japan's successful operations in the Pacific.⁵ The attack on Pearl Harbour clearly puzzled Chongqing and made it hesitant about its future policy. Tokyo was keeping a watchful eye on the changing mood in Chongqing in connection with Japan's successes in the war against the United States and Britain, and intended to put more pressure on Chiang Kaishek and force him to surrender.

In January 1942, Japan's former ambassador to the USSR, Tsurakichi Oota visited Nanking where he strongly urged Wang Jingwei to participate more actively in the process of conciliation between Tokyo and Chongqing. At the same time General Okamoto Kiyofuku, department chief of Japan's General Staff, was suggested to establish direct connections, by radio and through his spies, with high-ranking officials at Central Headquarters in Chongqing.⁶ Prince Takashi Higishikuni, a member of the Inner Cabinet, who thought the situation highly propitious for talks with Chiang Kaishek, suggested in December 1941

^{*} The *Dajung* got only as far as Hankou, where she received a message that neither the schooner nor the persons on board would be allowed to enter the territory under central government control.

that Mitsura Toyama, an ardent advocate of the "new order" in Asia, be sent to Chongqing to help the local leaders devise ideological grounds for surrender.⁷ But this approach was given a negative reception by the Japanese government. Premier Tojo, in the flush of the Japanese victories in the Pacific, rejected the idea of direct government and military contacts with Chongqing. Tojo also took a negative view of the proposal of Foreign Minister Hitoshi Togo in March 1942, to work out peace terms and submit them for discussion.⁸ The Premier believed that the surrender terms made known to Chiang Kaishek should be accepted as a result of military strikes delivered to Guomintang armies in the immediate future.⁹ He also believed that Chiang Kaishek would surrender once the Guomintang army was in peril of complete destruction.

As Fumimaro Konoye wrote in his memoirs, General Tojo was unable to take a sober view of the correlation of belligerent forces or make any long-term forecast about the war, because his vision was dimmed by the first serious military victories of the Japanese navy and army in single combat with the United States.¹⁰

In the light of these facts, Tojo attached no particular significance to the *Dajung* mission and, instead, demanded that the commander of the Japanese expeditionary forces in China intensify preparations for local offensive operations and step up air strikes against Chongqing to give Chiang Kaishek to understand that the Japanese army, navy and air force were strong enough and fully resolved to bring the Guomintang leaders to their knees. Furthermore, Tojo thought it of prime significance for the Japanese command at that time to secure overland routes across China for personnel and supplies in order to follow up the success of the offensive operations in the Pacific, and for raw material and food from Southeast Asia to Japan and Manchuria.

At the time the *Dajung* was sailing up the Yangzi, the Japanese re-grouped their army in China and readied it for a limited offensive in the provinces of Hubei and Hunan. At the airfields of Hankou and Nanchang the Japanese were concentrating a light-bomber force which, as a special operational group, was to use "air terror" tactics against Chongqing, war-time capital of Guomintang China.

Simultaneously, the Japanese expeditionary army in North

China was ordered to step up punitive operations against guerilla areas and seal them off still more from the rest of the country. The order pointed out that one of the principal tasks of the punitive troops was to confiscate food, raw materials and finished products, including household utensils, from the local population. It also specified that if the captured goods could not be taken away, they should be burned or otherwise destroyed. Meanwhile, the Japanese command was looking for ways to transfer some of its fighting units from China to the Pacific.

On March 17, 1942, General Gen Sugiyama, Chief of the General Staff of the Japanese Army, reported at the General Headquarters of the Japanese Emperor on a plan for transferring from China to the Pacific Theatre seven divisions out of the 27, which then constituted the expeditionary army in China, before the end of May.

Sugiyama proposed that if Japan failed to prevail upon Chongqing to surrender, before May or June 1942, it should speed up the formation of another 10-12 divisions of Nanking puppet government troops and, after substituting some of them for the Japanese forces blockading guerilla areas in North China, send the latter to the Pacific to beef up the Japanese forces fighting there. Gen Sugiyama believed that in this situation Chongqing and Nanking "could join forces to fight their common enemy, the Communists. This would serve the interests of the Japanese command in China".¹¹

Colonel Sentaro Oshida, Chief of Operations at the Headquarters of the Japanese expeditionary forces in North China, reported to General Yasujiro Okamura that Chiang Kaishek had marshalled 21 divisions along the front: Zesiu-Linfeng, Wangquan, Pinming (south-west Shanxi), Shenmu, Yulin, Jingbian (along the Great Wall) in preparation for a punitive expedition against the communist forces in North China in the summer of 1942. Besides, 12 divisions of the Nanking "government's" army had taken up initial positions along the Peking-Shijiazhuang railway.¹² Sentaro Oshida suggested that operational contact be established between the three forces—the Japanese, Chongqing, and Nanking armies—and that they fight in concert in the forthcoming punitive campaign codenamed Shishi.*

* This is the contraction of "Shina tai shina" (China Against China).

Some progress was made in this direction. An officer of the 171st Brigade of Guomindang troops who went over to the 8th Army said that on March 27, 1942, some Chiang Kaishek and Wang Jingwei generals had met clandestinely in Xi'an with the mediation of the Japanese intelligence service to discuss details of a joint punitive operation against the Shenganning guerilla region. He also said there were rumours that his brigade would soon receive Japanese arms and ammunition allegedly captured in recent fighting in the Zesiu-Lingshi area. Brigade headquarters, however, knew nothing of any clashes with the Japanese in this region or of the existence of any major Japanese garrisons there. Therefore, the officers of the brigade were of the opinion that the Japanese command in North China would supply Guomindang troops with arms and ammunition, provided these were promptly used against the 8th Army.¹³

Japanese garrisons in North China, especially those protecting supply routes, were ordered by the commander of the expeditionary forces in this area not to interfere with the movement of Chinese divisions closer to guerilla areas or bases.¹⁴

By the end of May 1942, about 45 divisions of the Guomindang and the Nanking "government" were concentrated in North China against the guerillas. This massive concentration of troops enabled the Japanese to withdraw seven divisions from the China Theatre to the Pacific. However, General Sugiyama regarded any further transfer of troops from China as inexpedient because the Japanese forces in China were intended as a show of force and as a threat to Chongqing.¹⁵ In May 1942, the main forces of the Japanese 3rd Light-Bomber Division launched bombing raids on Chongqing, Chengdu and other towns in Sichuan from airfields in and around Hankou.* The air attacks on Chongqing,

* In December 1941, when a successful Japanese advance reversed the situation of the allies in Northeast Burma, the Anglo-American command ordered Claire Chennault's air squadron to fly over the Himalayas and land in Kunming, thus coming under the authority of General Stilwell, chief military adviser of the allies in Chongqing.

This squadron, which was later re-organised as the 23rd Assault Air Group, took over airfields at Guilin, Lingling and Hengyang and was ordered to attack Japanese river transports on the Yangzi, Japanese troop trains on the Peking-Hankou railway and Japanese airfields in the Hankou area.

which had hardly any flak, greatly disturbed Chiang Kaishek and his US military and political advisers. They sent alarming reports to Washington after each Japanese raid. Major-General Chennault, who was in command of a US air group was instructed to show more fight. He was also ordered to carry out the first air raid on Japan with the support of aircraft carriers of the US Seventh Fleet.

On April 18, 1942, Tokyo had its first air alert since the outbreak of the war in the Pacific, with sixteen B-24 and B-25 bombers approaching it at a great altitude. The bombing of Tokyo, Osaka and Kobe seriously alarmed the Emperor's General Headquarters. Its anxiety was aggravated by the fact that, according to the Japanese Air Defence Command, the US bombers landed on airfields in Zhejiang (what the Japanese did not know was that on their way to Tokyo the bombers landed and re-fuelled on aircraft carriers of the US Seventh Fleet).^{*} This gave the

The Japanese command called the actions of the 23rd Air Group "guerilla warfare" because the raids were made either by wings or individual aircraft, and as a rule avoided contact with Japanese fighter planes. In March 1942, a number of B-25 bombers of the 10th US Air Wing based in East India landed on airfields in Fujian and Zhejiang (Lishui, Quzhou, Yushan, and others) which had been prepared for them by Chinese troops and civilians. These American aircraft bombed troops and vehicles of the 11th and 13th Japanese armies in the Shanghai-Hangzhou-Nanking triangle. Particularly great losses were inflicted on the Japanese in raids on the Hangzhou-Nanchang railway.

On March 10, 1943, Chennault's air group was reorganised into the 14th Air Corps, which remained subordinate to General Stilwell. Stilwell and Chennault disagreed over the role that aviation was to play in the China Theatre. Stilwell believed that the land forces, especially the infantry, were the main force in the Asian, and particularly the China, theatres. According to him, the air force and navy should play a supporting role. Chennault, for his part, held that the air force could bring Japan to its knees, and that given a stable frontline in China, air warfare should be the main form of military operations. At first, on Stilwell's insistence, Chennault's corps included mostly P-38, P-40 and P-43 fighter planes designed for cooperation with land forces. But as Stilwell's relations with Chiang Kaishek deteriorated, Chennault succeeded in getting a number of B-25 and B-24 bombers. By April 10, 1943, the corps had 152 aircraft, and by May 8, as many as 174, including 24 bombers. See *Daitoa senshi*, pp. 107-108.

^{*} The bombers took off from three aircraft-carriers of the US Seventh Fleet which had shortly before arrived off the Chinese coast east of Wenzhou. After completing their bombing raids on Tokyo, Osaka and

Emperor's General Headquarters an exaggerated idea about possible further bombing raids on Japan by US aircraft from airfields on China's eastern coast. The Japanese High Command therefore ordered the expeditionary forces in China to drive the enemy away from the Hangzhou-Nanchang-Changsha railway ("Senkan" campaign) and capture airfields the United States was using in Fujian, Jiangxi and Zhejiang provinces.¹⁶ The "Senkan" campaign was to be carried out by the 11th and 13th Japanese armies with the support of the 3rd Air Division.

The 15th, 22nd and 116th infantry divisions of the 13th Army were to advance in two echelons from the Fenghua-Shaoxing-Xiaoshan-Fuyang area in a southwestern direction, the main objective being to drive the enemy away from the Hangzhou-Nanchang railway, capturing, with specially detailed task forces, the airfields of Jinhua, Lishui and Yushan. Simultaneously, units of the 11th Army (3rd and 34th infantry divisions) were to advance from Nanchang along the railway, capture the towns of Yintan and Shangrao (Shanzhao), and on reaching the line of Yushan-Guangfeng make contact with forward units of the 13th Army.¹⁷ Simultaneously, plans were being drawn up for the 11th, 13th and 23rd armies to mount a summer offensive on Changsha and farther south on Canton. Thus the Zhejiang-Hunan campaign if it succeeded, was to lay the ground for a still more sweeping offensive (in cooperation with the 23rd Army) in South China to capture the entire Peking-Canton railway. That second operation was of particular importance to Japan in view of its waning control over maritime supply routes.^{*}

In the middle of April 1942, the Japanese completed the concentration of troops (15th, 22nd and 116th divisions, totalling about 60,000 officers and men) in the Xiaoshan-Shaoxing-Qaozhen-Fuyang area. With first light on April 31, they launched an offensive in three directions along the Hangzhou-Nanchang

Kobe, all 16 bombers did not return to their bases. See *Daitoa senshi*, pp. 111-112.

^{*} At that time a plan was being debated in the Japanese press for laying on a continuous line of communication between Tokyo and Singapore which was to pass across the sea first from Tokyo to Shanghai, then across the Japanese-occupied provinces of Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Guangxi and Yunnan to Indochina, and finally, across Thailand. See *Asahi Guraifu*, April 14, 1942.

railway. The first (right) group (12,000 officers and men, reinforced with an engineer regiment, a mountain-artillery regiment and two motor transport battalions) set out from Fuyang in the direction of Tongliu-Jiande-Shouchang, scaled the Longshan mountain ridge, intending to reach Lunyi railway station by May 15 and cover the right flank of the central group (numbering about 40,000) advancing from the Xiaoshan area towards Lanqi-Jinhua where, according to Japanese intelligence, the Americans had an airfield guarded by two Guomindang brigades.¹⁸ A third Japanese group (about 8,000) which was advancing from the Qaozhen area, south of the Hangzhou-Nanchang railway, was to cover the left flank of the central group.

The Chinese troops in this area had no clear-cut plan of defence. Their resistance was scattered over a large area. Only after they had learned that forward Japanese detachments had completed their passage across the Longshan mountain ridge, did the Guomindang command send a brigade of the 164th Division on foot from Lanqi to hold up the enemy's right group.¹⁹

The brigade made slow headway, and when word came that on May 15 forward units of the Japanese right group had occupied Shouchang, it turned back and participated in the fighting for the Lanqi-Jinhua area. On May 28, these two important towns were also taken by the enemy.²⁰

At the end of April 1942, that is, before the Japanese had started the offensive, General Chennault moved his air force to airfields in Hunan and Yunnan provinces. This gave the Japanese command grounds to report that it had completed its task, which was to "eliminate the US threat of air strikes against Japan".^{*21}

By the middle of June, almost the entire Hangzhou-Nanchang railway was cleared of Chinese troops. To secure and protect lines of communication which were constantly under attack by guerillas of the New 4th Army and the local peasant militia, some of the units of the right group of the advancing Japanese

* On May 28, the 13th Army captured Jinhua, on June 7 Quizhou, on June 12 Yushan, and on June 24 Lishui. On June 2, the 11th Army took Jinxian, on June 4 Fuzhou, on June 12 Jianchang, and on June 16 Guiqi. By June 1, the forward detachments of the three groups met outside Guangfeng. See *Istoriya voiny na Tikhom okeane*, (A History of the War in the Pacific), Vol. III, Moscow, 1958, pp. 281-282.

troops were posted along the Hangzhou-Nanchang railway and at some larger towns and villages.

In the course of the offensive in late May 1942, a group of Japanese troops (more than 45,000 strong) was concentrated in the Nanchang area, poised to seize the section of the railway between Nanchang and Changsha.²² The assault was to be supported by two armoured trains and an air group under Major Kubota.

However, this Japanese plan was thwarted by developments in Fujian Province, where the Japanese military command, on orders from Tokyo, mounted landing operations to capture all ports and the entire coast of the East China Sea. Japanese naval vessels carried amphibious troops to the east coast of China from Shanghai and Hangzhou in May and June 1942. In a surprise attack launched on June 11, a Japanese landing party captured the town and port of Wenzhou. On the same day another Japanese landing party captured the port of Fuzhou (Foochow). Throughout June, the Japanese landing parties here received reinforcements and even pushed forward units far inland in the western and northwestern directions, capturing the main lines of communication. They took Jingning, Pucheng and Jiangyang before the end of June. This enabled the two landing parties—the Wenzhou and Fuzhou troops—to make contact at a point outside Nanping. As a result, the Japanese now had a force of over 30,000 in Fujian Province, not counting the artillery and aircraft.

Unable to halt the enemy in Fujian, the Chinese decided to hit Japanese troops defending the Hangzhou-Nanchang railway. Two Chinese groups—one from the Qianshan-Chongban-Jiqi area (south of the railway), and the other from the Wuyuan-Deging area (north of the railway)—struck the weak Japanese defences simultaneously. The Japanese, who did not expect an enemy counter-attack at this point, abandoned the town and railway station of Shangrao on July 19, 1942. After that, the counter-attacking Chinese troops (more than 100,000 officers and men) turned east and liberated more than thirty towns and villages.²³ The resulting critical situation forced the Japanese command to cancel its earlier assignment to the Nanchang group and to commit it to aid the troops fighting in Zhejiang Province. The outlook for the Japanese troops, who were overextend-

ed, was nothing less than gloomy. The Chinese command had the opportunity to exploit its success and clear Zhejiang and Jiangxi of the enemy. However, heavy rains which hampered supplies and evacuation of the wounded, as well as a shortage of arms and ammunition, prevented the Chinese from advancing any farther,²⁴ enabling the Japanese in Zhejiang and Jiangxi to take up a positional defence.

American and British advisers kept reminding Chiang Kaishek that it was absolutely necessary to retain control over the east and southeast coasts of China, because aid to the China Theatre could come only through their ports. However, when the Japanese landed their troops, the Anglo-American command failed to provide assistance, even though at first the landing parties had neither air nor sea cover, so that even modest US air force contingents could have prevented the landings. The US aircraft were also idle during the fighting in Zhejiang and Jiangxi provinces. Chennault's air group confined itself to a few air raids on Japanese positions in South China and attempts at bombing eastern ports in French Indochina. In fact, the strategic line of the American command had changed. Whereas in the spring of 1942, the Americans had insisted on 30,000 more Chinese being put to work on the building of convenient airfields and other landing facilities from which US aircraft could attack Japan and Manchuria, in the summer and autumn of that year, after they had moved to more remote and quieter areas in Hunan and Yunnan, the US command no longer raised this question.

In the autumn of 1942, after Japan had exhausted the advantage of its surprise attack on the United States and Britain in the Pacific, the Japanese command decided to make the most of the enemy's total inaction in China and take some of its troops out to fill the breaches in the Pacific Theatre.

The instruction on the principles of control over lines of communication in the areas of military operations issued by the commander of the Japanese forces in China, said, among other things, that "insignificance of the number of major supply routes and the limited flow of cargo and people make it possible to sharply reduce the number of men on patrol duty in China and send them to strengthen contingents on the fighting front".²⁵ The implementation of this instruction led to a considerable reduction of Japanese personnel in China. In October 1941 the

strength of a Japanese division operating in China had been set at 18,000 officers and men, whereas in fact it had only 14,000 to 15,000 men, out of whom only 8,000 could be said to have full equipment. To make up for losses in the Pacific Theatre, the Japanese dispatched full-strength units (battalions and companies) there together with their commanders. To conceal from the enemy that its contingents in China were no longer as strong as they had been, the Japanese command, in its official staff documents, continued to mention divisions which were virtually non-existent except for their headquarters and logistical support units, and also some patrol detachments that carried on garrison duties in towns under Japanese occupation. Reinforcements from Japan consisted of soldiers of older age groups, called up out of the second and third reserves. The only exception was the crack units of the Japanese Kwantung Army in Manchuria.

To compensate for the depletion of the strength of their expeditionary army in China, the Japanese sought to strengthen their defensive fortifications, both front and rear. Using local material and cheap labour, the Japanese command ordered the building of earth-and-timber and stone bunkers or blocks specially designed by military engineers and intended for sections and platoons.*

In 1943, the Japanese continued local operations in China, aimed at boosting the "peace offensive" they had resumed in a bid to persuade the Chiang Kaishek government to agree to an armistice.

* These bunkers were either rounded or trapezoidal in shape, had embrasures and emplacements for firearms to block access to the roads and towns and villages. Officially, these bunkers or blocks were intended against the guerillas and to control the local population. Sites for setting up such blocks were selected near points of entry to towns or villages, near railway stations, or on elevations. Very often they could be seen inside town walls near the gates, and at highway crossings. The chief of a block garrison (usually a NCO or lance-corporal) had virtually unlimited powers. He could draft a police force from among the local Chinese, maintain contact with local authorities appointed by the Japanese, and commandeer practically anything that he may have thought necessary for the defence of a given area. The building of such blocks and their manning by small garrisons enabled the Japanese command to save on combat personnel. At the same time, this stretched small units of the Japanese Army out over hundreds of kilometres, which inevitably led to their demoralisation.

During this complex and precarious situation in China, the Soviet armed forces routed the Nazi 6th Army and 4th Panzer Army at Stalingrad. Soviet troops also drove the Nazis from the Caucasus where Hitler and his command had hoped to obtain oil and many other strategic raw materials, and then force their way to the oil-rich Middle East. The victory at Stalingrad provided key conditions for a radical change in the course of the World War II in favour of the antifascist coalition. It was also instrumental in reversing the military situation in China, where the movement for social and national liberation from Japanese imperialism now got new impulse.

Pointing to the significance of the Soviet victory at Stalingrad, Mao Zedong wrote: "This battle is not only the turning point in the war against fascism; it will also mark the turning point in the entire history of mankind." And further, "This battle is of crucial importance and will determine the course for the entire world war."²⁶

At that time, the Japanese carried out numerous punitive operations, and the general strategic situation was changing considerably. Many Japanese generals and officers in China thought: "Dame Fortune had turned her back on Japan with the collapse of von Paulus' army at Stalingrad. The Americans cheered up and joined the fray, with renewed faith in their lucky star."²⁷ On May 14, 1943, US Marines landed on Attu, and on May 30, finished off the Japanese garrison on that island. On August 15, US troops landed on Kiska Island and wiped out nearly the entire Japanese garrison there. On November 1, 1943, a major sea and air battle was fought off Bougainville, with the Japanese sustaining a serious defeat. After that, on November 21, the Americans landed on the islands of Makin and Tarawa, and later US Marines made rapid progress towards New Guinea and in the Central and Southeast Pacific.

The more outspoken men in the army headquarters in Tokyo were now quite vocal about the time having arrived for land strategy and the decisive contribution that land forces were to make to the operations of 1943-1944. Since the changed strategic situation stiffened Chongqing's resistance to Tokyo's "peace" offensive, the Japanese were now preparing wide-ranging spring and summer operations in Hubei and Hunan. One of their objectives was to prevent the peasants of these provinces (espe-

cially Hubei), the major grain-producing regions of China, from taking in the harvest, to destroy all standing crops, and in this way use the famine factor to bring the Guomindang government to heel.

Acting in accordance with a plan approved by the Tojo cabinet, two limited offensive operations were carried out in the course of 1943—one in the western part of Hubei (May 5-June 14) and the other in the Changde area, on the western shore of Lake Dongting (November 2-December 25). These two operations were said to be aimed at improving the initial positions for a subsequent offensive in the western and southwestern directions to threaten Chongqing, the seat of the Chiang Kaishek government. The ulterior motive of these operations, however, according to the oral "elucidation" furnished by General Hata, commander of the Japanese expeditionary army in China, at a conference of the Japanese commanding officers on May 2, 1943, in Nanchang, was to produce a show of force and resolution which would result in sensible decisions, bringing about a drastic change in the situation in the China Theatre. The idea was to use the threat of the fighting coming closer to Chongqing as a means of compelling Chiang Kaishek to make peace with Japan.

The Japanese detailed the 3rd, 13th, 34th, 39th and 40th infantry divisions and the 20th brigade and the 17th independent brigade, a total of 90,000 officers and men and 280 guns, for the offensive in western Hubei, with the air support of 76 aircraft (27 light bombers, 11 reconnaissance planes, and 38 fighters).*

* With the general deterioration of the strategic situation in the Pacific, the Japanese command had limited reserves in China. Significantly, the units operating in West Hubei were badly undermanned, with only 40-50 per cent of authorised strength in divisions and brigades. The Japanese air and artillery units were even more severely undermanned. The operation in the area of the western shore of Lake Dongting was carried out practically by the same units that the Japanese command used in the operation in West Hubei, except that in the former case an additional contingent of 10,000 soldiers took part, specially sent from Japan for the purpose. Thus a total of 100,000 troops were engaged in the battle of Lake Dongting. The Japanese could manoeuvre their forces on the China front with such ease only because of the reluctance of the Guomindang army to intensify military operations.

The Chinese put up defences (the 6th, 28th and 30th army groups, the 20th, 124th and 131st Sichuan divisions and five independent brigades, a total of about 300,000 officers and men, 198 guns and 21 aircraft) to cover a line of about 380 km. between Shishou and Wanxiang on the southern bank of the Yangzi. In addition, there were the 26th and 10th army groups on the defensive in the Changsha and Henyang area. These included more than 50 US fighter planes which, however, were still in the testing stage and did not join combat; instead, they were assigned to cover Chongqing, Chengdu and other towns in Sichuan.

The above figures show that the Chinese had numerical superiority, while the Japanese had more artillery and aircraft. However, the Chinese were overextended along the southern bank of the Yangzi, holding shallow, often fragmentary, defensive positions.

The Japanese took advantage of this, and their main group (the 3rd, 13th, 34th, 39th and 40th infantry divisions and reinforcements) was concentrated in a small area along the northern bank of the Yangzi in the Yuanyang, Danyang and Yichang area; the 17th independent brigade covering the left flank of this group was deployed near Shashi, and the 3rd and 13th divisions advancing on the right flank were concentrated in the Xinshan-Xinhuaikou area. Also, the Japanese command had the stand-by 14th mixed brigade in the Zhushen area.

This should enable the main Japanese group to cross the wide Yangzi River and, with no fears for its flanks, over-run the disjointed Chinese defences on the southern bank and then, after re-forming into march columns, to mount an offensive in a direction it expected to afford it the greatest advantage. To mop up Chinese positions in the rear of the advancing columns would be the job of the second echelon consisting of the 14th mixed brigade which included one motorised and one cavalry regiment.

By May 5, 1943, preparations for the offensive had been completed. The Japanese command, which expected no more than

token resistance from the Guomindang troops, decided to "train" its troops in the planned crossing operation, thoroughly preparing them for this task in full view of the enemy. It detailed detachments to villages along the northern bank of the river in order to confiscate everything the Japanese could use to cross the Yangzi: small junks, fishing boats, and wooden gates and doors that could be tied into rafts. These undisguised preparations for a crossing of the Yangzi gave the Chinese command due notice and prompted it to prepare for a rebuff. The 28th Army Group consisting of the 15th and 62nd infantry divisions, and the 20th and 124th Sichuan divisions, took up earlier prepared positions in the expected crossing area. At dawn on May 11, the first echelon of Japanese troops cast off from the northern bank of the Yangzi. The Chinese on the southern bank withheld fire even when the Japanese opened fire on crossing the middle of the river in accordance with their army regulations. Some 20-30 minutes before the first Japanese echelon had pushed off from the northern bank, artillery and aircraft began to "work over" the southern bank, but missed their target, because Chinese troops had been pulled back 10-15 kilometres. When units of the first echelon neared the bank and began disembarking, Japanese aircraft and artillery stopped their shelling and bombing of the southern bank. The Japanese were sure that a Chinese retreat had begun long before.

Over the next ten days, by May 22, the Japanese main force captured Chunyang, Yidu, Zhijiang and Liujichang, covering a distance of about 100 km. This rather slow rate of advance showed that the Japanese command had misgivings over the next to unmolested crossing. The small skirmishes with the enemy which sometimes flared up on the flanks added to the anxiety, although there did not seem to be reason enough for serious precautionary measures.

Actually, the Japanese did have grounds for apprehensions. Early next morning, the strung-out Japanese columns were attacked by the 28th Chinese Army Group. The surprise factor carried the day. Sustaining heavy losses in personnel and materiel, the Japanese hastily retreated. The ruse that mitigated the situation a little for the retreating Japanese was the feigned attempt of units of the 3rd and 13th Japanese divisions to cross the Yangzi from Xihuaikou towards Badong-Wufeng, giving the

The description of Japanese operations in China in 1943 is based on materials in the DMA, reg. 4, case 9967, file 43, sheets 127, 186-187, 196, 228.

impression that they intended to hit the rear of the Chinese counter-attacking units of the 28th Army Group. This caused the Chinese command to halt the pursuit. On June 14, 1943, the Japanese command called off the operation, it detailed a small force to defend the northern bank of the Yangzi, while all the other troops were brought from Western Hubei to the Shashi-Hezhong-Yozhou area to rest and re-form.

Soon, preparations began for an offensive on the western shore of Lake Dongting where the Japanese were planning to use the support of their river fleet that had entered the lake from the Yangzi.

The preparations took all of four months, much longer than usual, owing to the failure of the Western Hubei operation and a lack of sufficient reserves to make up for the sustained losses.

Knowing that the Japanese were intending to attack the Fifth Military Zone, the Chinese command asked the US 14th Air Wing and the US military advisers in Chongqing to provide air support for its troops there.

The Japanese command detailed about 100,000 troops for the offensive on Changde. Anticipating that US aircraft might take part in the fighting, the Japanese strengthened their air support, bringing it up to 70 bombers, 50 fighters and 30 reconnaissance planes. In addition, the 17 warships of the river navy on Lake Dongting had flak. The assault troops were trained to hit air targets, and special awards were promised to soldiers who shot down enemy planes.

The Chinese contingent was supported by units of the 20th Sichuan Army (133rd, 135th, and 136th divisions) and the 5th Army Group (60th and 61st divisions), bringing up the total Chinese force in this area to 400,000-420,000. The number of direct support aircraft (including US aircraft) was 150.

On November 2, 1943, the main Japanese attacking force, operating over a wide front, crossed the Yangzi in the Hezhong-Shishou-Shashi area and rushed southwards. At the same time, ships off the western coast of Lake Dongting landed infantry units, which lunged towards Huazhong-Nanxiang with the end objective of penetrating the Linli area and meeting the main attacking force. The subsidiary Japanese troops in the Yichang area (3rd and 13th infantry divisions) also crossed the Yangzi and, on December 16, after outflanking the Chinese positions in

the Wufeng area, approached the town of Shimen where it met stiff resistance by the 92nd Chinese Division and was halted.

In spite of this reverse, the Japanese succeeded, by December 16, in straightening out the front-line, which now ran along Nanxiang, Linli and Shimen where the Japanese command decided to assume the defensive. This decision was prompted by the absence of crossing facilities which had been destroyed by American and Chinese bombers on the Yangzi and by the fact that the short-range guns on Japanese ships on the lake made it impossible to provide fire support for any further advance. To conceal this decision from the enemy, the forward detachment made up of mobile units (motorised infantry and cavalry) of the 17th independent brigade crashed through to Changde on December 17-19, reached the outskirts of the town but was soon driven out by the Chinese 57th Division.

Several formations of the 4th Military Area (59th, 90th and 99th divisions) were then moved to the city, and at dawn on December 20 the entire Chinese troops from Changde to Wufeng struck at the Japanese who had not yet consolidated their positions, and threw them back to the Yangzi. At this point the Chinese encountered artillery fire by ships of the Japanese river fleet, that had entered the Yangzi, and called off the pursuit. By December 25, the front-line was completely restored and the Chinese regained their old positions.

That meant that the Japanese in 1943 failed to carry off their campaign in China. However, the Guomindang army never followed up the opportunities it won to mount a counter-offensive that might have cleared Hubei of the enemy and enabled Chinese troops to cross the Yangzi and gain a firm grip on the northern bank.

Nor did the Japanese gain ground in their fight against the guerillas and the people's liberation forces. The only thing they succeeded in doing was to re-group their forces in order to remove Wang Jingwei's and Chiang Kaishek's Chinese troops into the "first echelon".

Massed in North China were more than 200,000 Japanese troops. They constituted the "second echelon" of the Chongqing and puppet Nanking armies (combined strength 1,100,000 men) which were to pursue the tactic of "using Chinese to fight Chinese".

The Japanese troops in North China were so disposed as to be able to make immediate contact and act jointly with the Kwantung Army in Manchuria if needed.

**Japan's "New Policy" for the Occupied
Part of China in 1943.
Japan's Intensified
"Peace Offensive" on Chongqing**

All this while the Japanese continued their "peace offensive" on Chongqing. The state of Japan's military-industrial complex and economy in 1943 was a cause of great concern to both the government and the big monopoly firms. This made the existence of the China Theatre a serious handicap in pursuing the strategic aims in the Pacific Theatre. A joint conference of the Liaison Committee and the Supreme Military Council held on December 21, 1942, to work out the "fundamental principles of policy towards China with regard to a successful conclusion of the war in Greater East Asia" revealed major differences over the ways to achieve "strategic results" in the China Theatre.

Realising that soon the Japanese troops would have to assume the defensive on the islands of the Pacific and that the communication lines between Japan and occupied territories in South-east Asia were increasingly imperilled, all the participants in that conference attached great importance to the China Theatre, because only the cessation of hostilities in China could give Japan freedom of manoeuvre with its manpower and resources.

General Tojo even declared that success in the China Theatre could help accomplish three tasks of strategic importance. In the first place, the communication lines in China would make it possible to assemble the forces of the imperial army and transfer them closer to the borders of Burma and India, to French Indochina and Thailand, and in this way not only ensure success on land, but also consolidate the coastline of the South China Sea and the Pacific. Second, success in the China Theatre would help Japan strengthen the Kwantung Army and the entire front against the "northern neighbour" and in this way contribute to Germany's war effort as a member of the axis in exchange for submarines and new torpedoes Hitler had promised. And, third,

China's vast economic resources and manpower could to a great extent offset the growing difficulties that the Japanese Empire had in maintaining its communications with the South Sea territories.²⁸

Some of the participants in the conference, however, expressed doubt about the possibility of easily achieving success in the China Theatre. Japan's difficulties were two-fold. It was running short of manpower and, particularly, supplies to mount major offensive operations, and the situation in the China Theatre was becoming increasingly complicated and called for much flexibility. It was one thing fighting against guerillas and the people's liberation forces in China and quite another fighting the Guomindang army of Chiang Kaishek whose purpose at that time was to set up a solid defence line at the approaches to Sichuan Province and Chongqing, and to see to the safety of the Burma Road crossing the southwestern provinces of Guangxi, Guizhou and Yunnan, where the Americans also had their airfields. The Japanese also wanted to coordinate actions by the anticommunist forces of Chongqing and Nanking, and help them in blockading the Shenganning region and other guerilla areas in North China.

The participants in the conference noted that the political situation in China was marked by a sharp exacerbation of the conflict between the Nanking and Chongqing regimes, on the one hand, and the regime in the communist-controlled areas, on the other. The Guomindang's anticommunism became so great that it could now at any moment trigger a civil war, which would inevitably siphon off the forces of the entire Chinese nation. Such a course of events was becoming more and more likely, considering that the Red Army victory at Moscow did not "mean that the war in Europe has come to an end; the war is to continue, the German armies will take revenge for their defeat, and the Soviet Union will again find itself in a critical position". In this situation, Chiang Kaishek would meet no obstacles for starting an "anticommunist war" and if the situation on the Soviet-German front had again changed in Germany's favour, Chiang Kaishek might be expected to seek peace with Japan. The main condition Japan would set for an armistice, the conference held, was that Chiang Kaishek should "recognise Japan's special rights in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia".²⁹ Japan want-

ed to be able to use these territories at some future time as a springboard for war against the Soviet Union. The participants in the conference took it for granted that the Chongqing government, acting as an equal member of the anticommunist bloc, would promote measures taken by the Japanese Empire to establish a "new order" in East Asia.

The participants in the conference concurred that Chongqing should be warned of the menace that the Communists posed in China. They also thought it expedient to promise Chiang Kaishek that Japanese armed forces in North China would join the Guomindang troops in crushing guerilla-controlled areas and destroying the Communist Party of China, and that he should therefore "allow the Japanese command, after signing an armistice, to have its garrisons in the big cities of North China".³⁰

A heated discussion ensued over Japan's policy towards the Nanking "government". Although the two regimes maintained certain contacts, Chiang Kaishek and Wang Jingwei were hotly contesting the right to be the sole dictator of China. And Japan was faced with the choice of which of the two regimes would best suit its designs. Japanese authorities in occupied areas formally under the rule of the Nanking "government" gravitated towards Wang Jingwei, as they had before.

Still, it was difficult to decide what to do with the Wang Jingwei "government" if Chiang Kaishek accepted the surrender terms. Some of the Council members suggested that the two governments—the one in Chongqing and the one in Nanking—should be merged, with the armistice treaty bearing the signatures of the heads of both governments—and in this way regard the two as a coalition government. Other members, who knew Chiang Kaishek's vanity, suggested that after appropriate negotiations, the Nanking "government" should be dissolved and a new government under Chiang set up. This suggestion was made in the knowledge, too, that Chiang counted on massive economic and political support from the United States and Britain. If accepted, this proposal could in the opinion of General Gen Sugiyama, Japan's Chief of the General Staff, "reverse the situation and convert the Chongqing leaders from enemies to friends of the Empire".³¹

As it happened, Premier Tojo rejected these options and put a thoroughly negative colouring upon the personality of

Chiang Kaishek and his stance. He said, for example, that the historical ties of Chiang and his closest associates with the United States, and his apparent desire to have better relations with the Soviet Union called for caution and should be regarded as obstacles to negotiations with Chongqing. Tojo emphasised that the "national government" of Wang Jingwei should be the pivot of imperial policy in China, and all the more so because Japan had signed a peace treaty with it, and because it had been formally recognised by Japan's allies, so that it was essential to enhance its prestige.³²

Finally, the conferees formulated the Principles of Warfare in China. Designated as tentative, they were subject to periodical review, "depending on the shifting fortunes of war". With regard to the guerilla-controlled regions the Principles recommended the "Chinese Against Chinese" approach, with Japanese troops operating in the "second echelon" and joining the fighting only when the armies of Chiang Kaishek and Wang Jingwei needed assistance in their punitive operations. The idea was to bring Chiang Kaishek and Wang Jingwei together by involving them in joint operations against the Communists. But when the situation so required, these forces could easily be turned against each other if this served Japan's interests. However, if Chongqing refused to join openly in this anticommunist strategy and showed preference for closer links with the United States and the Soviet Union, active fighting would have to be unfolded in Central and South China and made to threaten the borders of Sichuan and Chiang Kaishek's capital, Chongqing as well as the American bases and airfields in Central and Southwest China. The Nanking "government" was to be given still broader opportunities to demonstrate its independence and political initiative, to strengthen its army and increase its combat personnel by including surrendering Chiang Kaishek troops, and to intensify its anti-Chiang Kaishek and anticommunist propaganda.

To camouflage the true essence of Japan's "new policy" in China, it was decided that Wang Jingwei's puppet troops should be used in punitive operations as often as possible, that Chinese military tribunals be set up consisting of trusted officers and generals of the Wang Jingwei army whose personal loyalty to Japan was not in doubt. Food, clothing and other property were also to be expropriated from the population primarily by the

Wang Jingwei army. For their part, the Japanese commanders of local garrisons were required to look into complaints from the population and "show their concern for the needs of the Chinese population" and distribute food that the Japanese troops had "appropriated" elsewhere in China to the starving populace.*

A number of political moves were to be made to contact Chongqing with a view to signing a peace treaty. These were to be bolstered by military operations scheduled for the spring and summer of 1943 (see the first section of this chapter). These operations were also intended to help the Japanese troops fighting in Burma and in the Pacific, and to strengthen Japan's military positions in Manchuria.

At the end of December 1942, Wang Jingwei visited Tokyo on the "invitation" of the Japanese government. He was received

* In March 1943, the Japanese proceeded to carry out their "Chinese Against Chinese" programme as planned at the conference held in December 1942. On March 1, 1943, the commander of the Japanese troops in North China, General Okamura, who was responsible for the strategic aspect of this programme applying specifically to guerilla areas, flew to Nanking where he spent several days in conference with Wang Jingwei. The immediate result of their talks was the publication on March 19 of new laws and instructions which provided for harsh reprisals against those who harboured guerillas or helped them otherwise, kept weapons at home, killed Japanese or Chinese soldiers, concealed grain or any other foodstuffs from the authorities, evaded compulsory labour service, etc.

The Nanking "government" sent punitive expeditions against "communist villages" in the frontline areas and against the 8th Route and New 4th armies. On Okamura's orders all weapons, ammunition and materiel of non-Japanese origin were captured by Japanese troops to be turned over to the puppet Nanking military command. The same order gave it authority to organise the repair of Japanese-made weapons and materiel, and to manufacture ammunition for Chinese-made weapons.

The Japanese formed special artillery-and-mortar groups attached to the punitive units of the puppet army, took up positions within effective range before attack and then poured artillery fire upon their target. Very often such "targets" were ordinary Chinese villages declared "communist" just because they happened to be near a guerilla area. Such use of punitive expeditions which supposed to promote Japan's "new" policy in China served the interests of the Japanese command. The units of Wang Jingwei's puppet army plundered, raped, and sowed carnage. In the eyes of Chinese peasants, officers and soldiers of the puppet Nanking "government" were the "worst and the most frightening beasts".

as the head of the Chinese "national government" with all due honours. The talks that Wang Jingwei had with Tojo and members of his cabinet continued until January 9, 1943, and had very important results.

The "national government" of China declared war on the United States and Great Britain. Speaking at the ceremony which formalised this declaration of war, Premier Tojo declared that henceforth the relations between Japan and the "national government" in Nanking would rest on a new basis of equality.³² He also declared on behalf of his government that Japan would renounce its industrial concessions in the part of China under the Nanking regime and hand the rights to the international settlements in Shanghai and Amoy to the "national government". All criminals captured in the settlements would be turned over to the "national government" by the Japanese military authorities.

This sudden change in relations between Japan and the Nanking "government" put Britain and the United States at a disadvantage. They had not renounced extraterritoriality and their special rights in the international settlements, and now their renunciation of these rights would appear as a move forced upon them by the example of an obvious aggressor who had been robbing the people of China of their freedom.

The United States and Britain were forced to declare that negotiations concerning the international settlements had been going on since October 10, 1942, that all the pertinent documents had already been drafted and were ready for signing—not with the puppet regime in Nanking but with China's legitimate government in Chongqing. It was also announced through American and British diplomatic channels that the signing of the relevant agreement would take place on January 11, 1943, at a grand ceremony in Chongqing.³⁴

As soon as Tokyo received word of Britain's and the USA's readiness to renounce extraterritoriality and rights to international settlements, the Japanese military authorities in China received orders to seize all public and cultural centres in the settlements, including radio stations and telephone exchanges. On February 2 and 3, 1943, Japanese troops removed the signboards from foreign-owned buildings and offices that the Japanese had, in effect, long since seized in Shanghai, Amoy, Shamen

(at Canton), and other cities, and replaced them with Chinese and Japanese signboards. To avoid incurring the displeasure of the "national government" in Nanking, the offices were at once turned over to Chinese "experts" trained specially for the job in advance.

On February 9, 1943, a mixed Japanese-Chinese commission was set up to prepare the transfer of Japanese concessions to the Nanking authorities. On March 14, the Japanese concessions in Hankou, Tianjin (Tientsin), Shashi (Shasi), Suzhou (Soochow), Hangzhou and Amoy were handed over to the Chinese (read puppet—*B. S.*) government "without compensation".³⁵ The handover ceremony was lavishly arranged. On March 30, 1943, General Tojo visited Shanghai and Nanking, and publicly praised the "generosity" and "humanity" of the Japanese towards China. Moreover, he plainly hinted that Chiang Kaishek was losing a great deal by continuing to offer resistance to Japan. Upon his return to Tokyo, Tojo told a group of businessmen and government officials that the new landmark in relations between Japan and China would benefit traders and entrepreneurs more than preferential rights ever did.³⁶

On March 27, 1943, ceremonies were held marking the transfer of the small international settlement in Amoy to the Wang Jingwei "government", and on June 30, the transfer of administrative control over the international settlement in Shanghai.³⁷

But the Japanese government went even further and brought pressure to bear upon the Vichy government which subsequently sent a representative to Nanking to formalise the handover of the French concessions in China to the Nanking "government". After that, on July 22, 1943, a Franco-Chinese agreement was signed on the transfer to China of the international settlement in Shanghai. The Japanese government went even further in its "new policy". In early August 1943, it signed an agreement with the Nanking "government" on taxing the incomes of Japanese entrepreneurs and traders to boost the treasury of the "national government". The whole campaign culminated in the signing on October 30, 1943, of a mutual assistance pact between Tokyo and Nanking.³⁸

* It soon transpired, though, that after their withdrawal, the Japanese left their agents in all these concessions, and that concessions under the Chinese signboard continued to operate in Japan's interests.

These diplomatic steps of Premier Tojo caused much concern in Tokyo. Many influential representatives of the ruling quarters feared that the flirtation with Wang Jingwei had gone a bit too far, and might so enrage Chiang Kaishek that he would once and for all slam shut the door to negotiations which had until then been left open. Tojo himself must have felt, too, that he had overplayed his hand in demonstrating the sovereignty of Wang Jingwei's puppet regime. Speaking before members of his cabinet and leaders of the Association of Industrial Services to the Throne on August 27, 1943, Tojo said that Chongqing had been given an object lesson of how seriously the imperial government viewed the participation of all Chinese leaders without exception in the creation of the "new order" in Asia, and that Chongqing could play a leading role in that process.³⁹ Tojo's statement became the keynote of Japanese propaganda of "peace and friendship" between China and Japan. This propaganda had been started long before throughout the occupied parts of China and in frontline areas and, according to Colonel Gennosuke Kato, Chief of the Press Department at the Headquarters of the Japanese expeditionary army in North China, it reposed on the allegations, first, that China's military and economic potential had been exhausted while Chiang Kaishek's allies—the United States, Britain and, particularly, the Soviet Union—were hardly in a position to give China any sizeable assistance because of the war going on in Europe and the Pacific, and, second, that China's weakness had been exploited by anti-national (Communist) elements to split the country into several parts with the intention of handing them to "white" imperialists—the USA, Britain and the USSR. Hence the conclusion that China needed peace and territorial unity under a government that could, in alliance with Japan, "put the country back on its feet and restore its rights and functions as a national sovereign state".⁴⁰

These ideas were circulated by numerous propaganda teams equipped with motor vehicles, corresponding media, and popularly written literature in Chinese. The main purpose of the brainwashing operation was to convince the population of the need "to call on the Chongqing government to exercise discretion and use the favourable situation to accept Japan's magnanimous proposals and thus establish peace in China."

The Japanese propaganda teams made contact with local antinational groups of the bourgeoisie and feudal intelligentsia and had them speak at public meetings about the "magnanimity" of the Japanese Empire and its concern for the "good and prosperity" of China.

The scope of this propaganda campaign for "peace with Japan" can be judged from the anxiety that it caused in Chongqing. At a reception in the US diplomatic mission General He Yinping, Chief of the General Staff of the Chinese Army, said this challenge from Tokyo should be responded with an appropriate line of conduct. In Tokyo, his statement was interpreted as a desire of the Chiang Kaishek followers to start peace negotiations. In this connection, General Tojo instructed the commander of the Japanese army in China, General Shunroku Hata, that if representatives of the Chongqing government approached the command of the imperial forces in China with an offer to negotiate, he should categorically demand, as a preliminary condition, that the agreement of January 1, 1942, on China's joining the Western allies in the war against the Axis be cancelled.⁴¹

The Japanese did not confine themselves to mere propaganda. Their intelligence service in China was hard at work to set up "extensive and ramified connections" with Chinese statesmen and military and party leaders with a view to paving the way for negotiations on peace and an alliance between Japan and China, and pooling the efforts of the two countries in the struggle against the Soviet Union and the Chinese Communists. The Japanese thought they would be able to establish such "extensive and ramified connections" once the German army launched an offensive and achieved success on the Russian front, while their own army was strongly entrenched in the southwestern and central parts of the Pacific, and the USA was too busy to devote attention to China.

Acting upon instructions from Tokyo, the intelligence centre in Shanghai, which had a network of trusted Chinese agents in the quarters close to Wang Jingwei, was to establish a direct link with Chongqing and contacts with the top echelon of the Guomindang hierarchy. General Kobayashi, Chief of the Nanking Garrison's Headquarters, was ordered to provide the Shanghai intelligence centre with radio facilities and airplanes to lift

needed men from Shanghai to Chongqing.⁴² On May 4, 1943, ministers of the "national government" were perplexed to learn that Wang Jingwei had cancelled a reception, and instead spent the day behind closed doors in conference with Wu Kaixiang, an ex-member of the Guomindang's Executive Committee and a well-known Japanese agent, and government minister Ding Moqing.

On May 7, 1943, it became known that Wu Kaixiang had been given a warm welcome at Chongqing airport by a minister in charge of the Guomindang's affairs in the Chiang Kaishek government. The welcoming party included Zhu Jiahua and other high-ranking Guomindang officials.

On May 11, Wu Kaixiang was received by Chiang Kaishek. Their meeting took place behind closed doors, without anyone else present, and was guarded by Dai Li, chief of the Guomindang's special service.

It soon came to light that Wu Kaixiang had been empowered to mediate in the peace talks between Chiang Kaishek and Japan. He submitted Chiang Kaishek the following peace terms:

1. Japanese troops would withdraw from Wuhan and Canton, while Chiang Kaishek's troops would be moved from these areas to the north in order to "fight Communists".
2. Nanking and the seaboard would "temporarily" remain under Japan's jurisdiction.
3. North China would be turned into a zone of joint struggle against the Communists.
4. The fate of Wang Jingwei, whether or not he resigned, will be easily decided.

Wu Kaixiang told Chiang Kaishek about the substance of his conversation with Wang Jingwei and General Kobayashi, to the effect that now, "prior to the crucial battles in Europe and the Pacific", Chongqing stood the best chance of becoming the most active force in the struggle against communism. Wu Kaixiang was accorded the same honours when leaving Chongqing as he had been when he arrived.

Washington and London hastened to counter Japan's "peace offensive" in China. Churchill, who knew Chiang Kaishek's vanity and adventurism, asked General Stilwell to demand, as tactfully as possible, that Chiang Kaishek should discontinue contacts with Japanese emissaries, because they constituted a flag-

rant breach of the commitments assumed by the Chongqing government under the agreement of January 1, 1942. But Stilwell, who knew Chiang Kaishek better than Churchill, was aware that with the continuing difficulties at the front both in Europe and the Pacific in 1943, and in view of the dire straits that China was in, it would be wrong to try and confront Chiang with an ultimatum. On July 12, 1943, Stilwell met Chiang Kaishek in his office and folded a map showing the situation on the fronts of Europe and the Pacific. He gave Chiang Kaishek to understand that the position of the Nazi army on the western front had deteriorated, while the Soviet forces were gaining ground in the summer campaign. In the Pacific, too, the Japanese forces were compelled to assume the defensive, whereas the Japanese command needed China and its territory to make up for positional losses in the Pacific where Japanese communications were under pressure of US aircraft which had command of the air. Stilwell also told Chiang that peace with Japan would spark off a civil war in China. The Communists would take advantage of the armistice with the Japanese aggressors to completely undermine the Guomindang's prestige among the people. Chiang Kaishek was in a quandary. On the one hand, he felt that in the circumstances he could get from the Japanese anything he might need to satisfy his ambition and, above all, have a loyal ally in the struggle against the Chinese Communists. On the other, he could not afford breaking with the United States, all the more so as the tide of the war in the Pacific had clearly turned in its favour.

Soon after this meeting, Chiang Kaishek was visited by Clarence E. Gauss, the US ambassador in Chongqing, who conveyed his government's displeasure over the growing contacts of representatives of the Guomindang (and members of Chiang Kaishek's government) with Japanese emissaries from Nanking. The US ambassador noted that in Washington's view, Chiang Kaishek's command was too passive in the war theatre despite Japan's deteriorating strategic situation in the Pacific. Chiang Kaishek assured Gauss of his abidance by the treaty of January 1, 1942, and asked for more weapons, ammunition and medical supplies. He also asked the US ambassador if it was possible to negotiate another loan in view of the fact that the officers and generals of his army had not been receiving their pay for more than three months.⁴³

Gauss promised to convey Chiang Kaishek's request to the President and assured him that all aid would be provided.

Soon news of Churchill's and Roosevelt's demarche in Chongqing reached Tokyo. It was aware of Chiang's dilemma. The split in the Guomindang, the consolidation of the positions of the Communists and the left wing of the Guomindang in the national anti-Japanese front, and China's dependence on materiel and foodstuffs from the United States and Britain held him back from starting open negotiations and accepting the Japanese peace terms.

That is why the Japanese government again returned to the question of Sino-Japanese alliance, hinting by this that Japan was not going to present any ultimatums to Chongqing but, on the contrary, would meet Chiang Kaishek as an equal partner and take measures to ensure that China, as a sovereign Asiatic state, could free itself from dependence upon the West. As for China's participation in military operations on the side of Japan's fascist allies, that was to be discussed by a future "reorganised national government of China".⁴⁴ At the same time, the Japanese government called off the mobilisation of additional contingents of men subject to military service whose shipment to the China Theatre had earlier been deferred. That was to prove to Chiang Kaishek that the Japanese government was prepared to show peace initiative and renounced any actions that might escalate the war in China. But this diplomatic move by Japan, too, fell flat. Most members of the Chiang Kaishek government opposed an alliance with Japan, which was tantamount to a simultaneous alliance with Nazi Germany. This attitude was prompted by the Soviet victories in the summer campaign of 1943, by Japan's deteriorating position in the Pacific, where its troops had gone over to the defensive along the entire front.⁴⁵ In this situation, Chiang Kaishek turned down all Japanese proposals.

This triggered a propaganda campaign against Chiang Kaishek and his government in Japan's own media and in the Chinese press in Nanking, Shanghai, Canton and other Japanese-occupied cities in China. Newspapers there carried numerous letters from "patriots" who demanded an end to the delivery of weapons and materiel from the United States, the ousting of American

and British military personnel from China, and closure of all US airfields on its territory, for all these things were "an insult to China", amounted to "a military occupation of China and humiliated the great Chinese people".⁴⁰ This "patriotic" campaign in the Japanese and pro-Japanese press was challenged by the Chongqing press. The latter stated that the general strategic situation in World War II had become increasingly favourable for the Western Allies, and that the tide of the China war was turning against Japan. US aircraft had command of the air and denied the Japanese freedom of manoeuvre, preventing them from regrouping and moving troops in the Chinese Theatre. The front in Central China had long since been stabilised. The Japanese army and navy in the Pacific were going over to the defensive and were now increasingly dependent on deliveries and reinforcements from China's territory.

Meanwhile Chongqing newspapers stepped up their anti-communist propaganda, trying to sell the idea that since the defeat of the Japanese aggressors was a foregone conclusion, the Communists and the troops under their control would become the principal enemies of China.

The Japanese hastened to take advantage of these anticommunist sentiments. Their propaganda media in China went out of their way to sour relations between the Guomindang and the Communist Party, trying to convince Chongqing that Mao Zedong and his entourage would use the United National Anti-Japanese Front to oust Chiang Kaishek and become sole "masters" of China. Tokyo assumed that in the event of a civil war, Chiang Kaishek and the Guomindang could not count on open support of Chongqing military efforts against the Communists from the Americans and British as long as they and the Soviet Union were wartime allies. In this situation, the Japanese government was ready to propose Chiang Kaishek that he could use Japanese forces in North and Central China against the people's liberation forces.

The main argument that Japan put forward for uniting its forces with those of the Guomindang was the urgent need to eliminate the menace of a violent communist coup and of the seizure of power in China by the Communists. This argument had its effect on Chiang Kaishek who was obsessed by the idea

of using Japanese garrison in North and Central China for a concerted assault on the guerilla areas and bases in the coming Third Anticommunist Campaign.

The Third Anticommunist Campaign of Chiang Kaishek and Contacts Between the Chinese and Japanese Commands

The victories of the Soviet forces on the Soviet-German front in 1943 had a tremendous military and political impact on China's people's liberation forces. They awakened growing feelings of international solidarity with the peoples of the Soviet Union. The Chinese showed a greater eagerness to fight the Japanese aggressors in offensive actions. However, the leaders of the Communist Party of China missed this opportunity. The guerilla armies in the vast territory of North, Central and South China were set the task to "build up strength, to expose the antinational policy of the Guomindang, and, above all, to force Chiang Kaishek and Wang Jingwei to withdraw their divisions besieging guerilla-controlled areas and bases, and, if they failed to do so, to come down hard upon these divisions, to break the blockade and arouse the Chinese people to the struggle against the two enemies—the Japanese and the Guomindang."⁴¹ At that time the view was already current in Yan'an that there should be no distinction made between the objectives of the national liberation, anti-Japanese war, and those of the struggle against the "internal enemy" in Chongqing. P. Vladimirov, a Soviet journalist and diplomat, who lived in the special region of China in Yan'an in 1942 to 1945, wrote in his diary: "Instead of pinning down the Japanese invaders, the 8th People's Revolutionary Army engages in sluggish defensive operations of a purely local significance. Every time the enemy starts a fight, the 8th People's Revolutionary Army retreats into the mountains to avoid battle. This enables the Japanese to prepare for a war against the USSR practically without hindrance... The 8th People's Revolutionary Army is strong enough to fight independent actions that would compel the command of the occupation forces to maintain considerable forces to secure the rear in Manchuria and North China."⁴²

This passive attitude had nothing in common with the over-

whelming desire of the Chinese people to drive the Japanese invaders out of the country as soon as possible. Nor did it accord with the desire of the Chinese people to unite all patriotic forces of the country for victory over the Japanese imperialists. This stance was seized upon by the Chongqing authorities as a pretext for fanning an anticommunist hysteria. In the summer of 1943, Chiang Kaishek and his Central Headquarters launched their Third Anticommunist Campaign.

The Third Anticommunist Campaign was aimed at "tightening the blockade round the Shenganning bandit (read guerilla —B.S.) region, concentrating on its borders three groups—the northern, western and southwestern—and simultaneously launching an offensive in the general direction of Yan'an, cutting the communist armed forces into three parts, and thus isolating and then eliminating them."⁴⁹

By May 1, 1943, most of the forces investing the Shenganning guerilla region were from the 34th, 37th and 38th Guomindang army formations of the 8th Military Area (a total of 11 divisions, about 200,000 troops, 198 guns and 12 aircraft).⁵⁰ In addition, the Guomindang brought along several detachments of fascist-minded youths ("blue shirts") who, on the pretext of holding a camp rally were taken to fields and forests close to the guerilla bases and, under the guidance of Guomindang officers, got their training for future combat against guerillas.*

During May 1943, the 1st and 90th armies were withdrawn from Hubei Province, where they faced the Japanese, and deployed on the border of the Shenganning guerilla region. The 1st Army was concentrated between Qinxian and Yanchuan, and the 90th Army in the Luochuan-Xixian area. To tighten the blockade along the line between Yichuan and Tongguan, the Guomindang moved in almost the entire 16th Army (minus one division)⁵¹. Thus, almost all troops of the 1st and 8th military areas were moved from the Japanese front to the border of the main guerilla-controlled region.

The Guomindang was also building up strength around other

* These groups were sent into populated centres in the guerilla-controlled areas first by the Guomindang and later by the Japanese intelligence services. Dressed in peasant clothes they infiltrated villages. Their commanders introduced themselves to the local population as guerilla leaders, and as such took detachments of the local peasant militia to pre-arranged places where they were ambushed by the enemy.

guerilla-controlled areas and bases in North China. For example, an additional eight divisions of the Kaifeng group were moved against the guerilla bases in Shenganning region. About 50 divisions, i.e. almost one-sixth of the Guomindang's total strength on the northern and central fronts were concentrated along the borders of the communist-controlled areas.⁵²

Hoping that a civil war would flare up in China, the Japanese command carried out only insignificant operations with a small number of troops against the Guomindang's forces. To help the Chongqing anticommunists, Japanese aircraft intensified their bombing raids on Yan'an and some other major towns in the guerilla-controlled region of Shenganning. In May-June 1943 alone, Japanese made 117 air-raids, with 168 aircraft taking part.⁵³ The absence of adequate air defence facilities enabled Japanese pilots to fly at low altitudes, strafing and bombing towns, villages and roads.

On June 11, 1943, Guomindang troops (the 1st Army from the Qinxian-Yanchuan area and the 90th Army from the Luochuan-Xixian area, the 38th Army Group from the Qinxian-Baoan area) began to move in the general direction of Yan'an. In his secret order to the 1st and the 90th armies, He Yingqing stressed that the "operation against Red bandit troops and their ring-leaders must be completed on November 7 with the capture of Yan'an, the strong point of this army and its leaders, where a military parade will take place and awards will be issued for valour displayed in battle."⁵⁴ On that same day, 21 Japanese aircraft bombed Yan'an for seven hours. This looked like a carefully planned concerted action by the Japanese and the Guomindang troops, which started an offensive on Yan'an. But the Guomindang offensive was essentially a failure. Over the period between June 12 and July 7, 1943, the 1st Army approached only the small towns of Yongqingzhen and Majiao (advancing about 1.5 km a day), and the 90th Army, which ran into stiff resistance outside Xixiang, covered a distance of only 40 km in 25 days. The 38th Army Group was pre-empted; the 8th Route Army which launched a counter-offensive recaptured Baoan, Xiujiaizhen and approached Qinxian.⁵⁵

As the Soviet troops launched their sweeping offensive at Kursk, the US ambassador in Chongqing congratulated Chiang Kaishek on July 7, 1943, on the success of their ally, the USSR.

On that day, the Guomindang and Soviet flags were hoisted over the building of the patriotic Anti-Japanese Liberation League.⁵⁶ The command of the 1st and 90th armies and the 38th Army Group was ordered by radio to halt their offensive against the Shenganning region. The summer 1943 Soviet offensive and the international response to the Soviet successes in the war against the Nazis in Europe forced Chiang Kaishek to refrain from further punitive operations against guerilla-controlled areas and to be more warlike against the Japanese aggressors. But even then the military and political leaders in Chongqing did not abandon their plans against the guerilla-controlled areas. They only tried to do the job with less conspicuous methods. Here the Japanese proved very helpful. The disguised cooperation of Chongqing and the Japanese took many different forms. Here are some of the more typical examples of this cooperation.

At 6 in the morning of July 3, a Japanese LB-93 light bomber landed at Nanking airfield; neat stacks of "gogais" (special releases of newspapers, or leaflets) were unloaded and then immediately reloaded into vehicles and driven to Shanghai, Xuzhou, Hankou, Nanchang and other occupied towns in Central China, at whose airfields Japanese combat and transport aircraft were based. There, the "gogais" were loaded into planes, which airlifted them to the headquarters of various Japanese units nearest to the front.

According to the instructions of the head of the press department of the Emperor's GHQ Major-General Yahagi, distribution of the latest flash news No. 826 ("gogai" No. 826) was a patriotic mission of all generals, officers and privates of the Emperor's Army.⁵⁷

On the night of July 5, 1943, Japanese bombers carried out air-raids on the areas of Wanxiang, Nanchong, Chongqing, Chengdu, and Baoji. But instead of the bombs that were usually dropped immediately after bright flares, the planes dropped multicoloured sheets of "gogai" No. 826. Printed in Japanese and Chinese, they reported the dissolution of the Comintern. The Japanese GHQ expected this to affect the Guomindang's attitude towards the Communist Party of China or at least further exacerbate relations between them. In a way these designs paid off.

Chongqing's central news agency began disseminating the Chinese-language "gogai" about the dissolution of the Comintern, accompanying it with a demand for the dissolution of the Com-

munist Party of China, liquidation of the guerilla-controlled areas and the people's liberation forces.*

In those days, commander of the 112th Japanese Division, who was at the same time the chief of the garrison at Taiyuan, called a meeting of commanders of various army units stationed at strong points in the western spurs of the Lulangshan along a line running from height 2386 southwest to Lingxian, Qikou and Wubao (on the right bank of the Huanghe).

The meeting decided to move the spearhead Japanese detachments forward since the Guomindang forces (27th, 28th, 53rd, 61st, 78th, and 168th divisions and reinforcement units) had abandoned the entire right bank of the Huanghe. These detachments were to provide fire support and have their sub-units manoeuvre to assist Chinese troops in case Hu Zongnan's army launched an offensive against the Shenganning guerilla region.

These Japanese forward units supported by artillery from the left bank of the Huanghe, moved from the Wubao, Suide, and Qingqian areas in order to threaten Yan'an from the north.

* Already on the morning of July 6, the residents of Xi'an saw pasted on the walls of the local branch of the Guomindang secret service "special news releases"—that the Japanese had dropped from the air—about the dissolution of the Comintern, and large posters with words in Indian ink addressed to the leaders of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in Yan'an calling upon them to dissolve and shut down the guerilla regions in North China. In the daytime, groups of fascist youth, the activists of Guomindang counter-intelligence, of the press service department and the staff of the censorship office were brought to the streets of the town. They were addressed by the chief of the Xi'an branch of the Guomindang special service, Zhang Difei. He called upon the gathering to send a collective address to General Hu Zongnan, the commander of the 8th Military Area, and his headquarters in Luochuna, asking them to launch a general offensive against the Shenganning guerilla region in order to destroy the main base of the Communists in North China. At the end of his speech Zhang Difei said that all the participants in the meeting were from that minute on considered mobilised, that they would be issued special armbands and letters addressed to the Guomindang authorities in all districts bordering on the Shenganning guerilla region and urging them to help the army of Hu Zongnan in his mopping up operation against Communists and their troops. A handpicked group of delegates headed by Zhang Difei's assistant, Ling Nanping, set out for Luochuan to hand General Hu Zongnan the collective message of the party and administrative organisations and institutions of the Guomindang in Xi'an. *Seiboku-no joko* (News from the North-West), Taiyuan, July 26, 1943, p. 26.

Army reconnaissance was ordered to closely follow all moves by Hu Zongnan's army and keep the staff of the operation's commander informed of any signs of regrouping or movements by its individual units.⁵⁸ Air reconnaissance was to keep close tabs on the roads linking Qingqian, Yanchuan and Yan'an, Luochuan, Ganquan, and Yan'an, and those across the Huanghe between Wubao and Yanchang.⁵⁹

The Japanese command was apparently quite serious about establishing a close cooperation with the Guomindang forces preparing an offensive against the Shenganning guerilla region. In fact, the Guomindang command removed troops from a fairly large section of its blockade ring on the right bank of the Huanghe. This was, in its way, an "invitation" to the Japanese to take joint action against the people's liberation forces. The Guomindang command hoped that to prevent the guerilla forces of the Shenganning area from joining guerilla troops in the Wutaishan area, the Japanese would fill the gap. And the Japanese did immediately take advantage of the breach in the front to smuggle in spies and saboteurs into the area to erode and subvert it from within.

The day after the staff meeting in Taiyuan, a heavily guarded freight train was seen running in the direction of the railway station of Yuci (southeast of Taiyuan). When the train was about 2.5 km away from Yuci, it stopped. The Japanese guards opened the shutters and out came hundreds of young men of about the same age dressed in peasant clothes. Judging from the speed with which they lined up, the young men were trained soldiers. Marching in square formation, they set out for a camp in the foot-hills east of Yuci.

To be seen among the Japanese guards who were following at a short distance behind the column, was a tall, sun-tanned, ageing, thin man wearing the uniform of a Guomindang general. He was, indeed, General Pang Bingxun, former commander of the 24th Guomindang Army Group in the Taihang mountains (on the border between the Shanxi and Henan provinces), who had surrendered with his troops to the Japanese in early May, 1943, and was now in command of the "Yuci column".* The "Yuci column" included 7,500 trained saboteurs selected from

* The Japanese thus took under their command about 70,000 Guomindang officers and men from the 24th Army Group.

the 24th Army Group (the remaining units of this group had been re-activated as the 27th, 40th and New 5th armies and several detachments for patrolling roads and railways.⁶⁰

From this camp east of Yuci, squads of saboteurs were taken to crossing points on the Huanghe and smuggled across the river into the Shenganning region. A particularly large number of saboteur squads crossed into the guerilla area in the sector held by Hu Zongnan's army between Luochuan and Fuxian. Some other Guomindang generals followed suit. In Shandong, 18 generals and colonels of the Guomindang army went over to the Japanese surrendering to them about 22,000 officers and men.⁶¹ This was done with the knowledge and even with the approval of the Chongqing military authorities, who apparently reckoned that these forces would be used by the Japanese against the guerillas.

The Japanese command regarded this mass of officers and men as a reserve for "war of Chinese against Chinese". Some of them were recruited as spies and saboteurs to be sent into guerilla areas and bases. The Japanese did not care so much that many of the newly recruited agents gave themselves up to the guerillas or sought refuge in the backwoods to evade serving the enemy. It was more important for them that the organisation of massive subversion undermined the morale and weakened the resistance of the guerilla forces. In addition, the Japanese command could now reduce to the minimum its own punitive operations against the Chinese population, since this function was being discharged with even greater zeal and brutality by turncoat Guomindang generals in Central and North China, who had at their disposal troops supplied with weapons and ammunition from the Japanese stock of booty.

* The command of the 8th Route Army learned about one such Japanese-organised act of infiltration and sabotage. This important information came from Hou Dexin, commander of a company of the 45th Division of the 24th Army Group, who had gone over to the guerillas. Hou Dexin and his saboteur squad had been ordered to infiltrate the Qingqian area, then break up into small groups and continue the advance, spreading panic and rumours among the population of the Shenganning guerilla region, and committing other acts of subversion. But Hou Dexin, when he reached the Qingqian area, gave himself up together with his squad, to a guerilla detachment which was holding a defensive position there, and was immediately sent to Yan'an.

This shows that in the course of the "third anticommunist campaign" in the summer of 1943, the Japanese and the Guomindang commands were acting very much in concert against the national liberation forces in North China.

The Japanese command admitted that only few of the many thousands of Chinese officers and men at its disposal "served faithfully to the Emperor's Army",⁶² but the very fact that Chongqing had permitted the mass defection of Chinese generals and officers had a tremendous political impact. The weaker resistance to Japan in China at a time when its strategic position in the Pacific was deteriorating, the isolation of guerilla-held areas and their blockade by Guomindang troops, the flagrant anticommunism formed by the Guomindang clique, and the constant threat of a civil war breaking out were for Japan tantamount to having an "allied front" in China.

This alarmed Washington and London and doubly so because Chiang Kaishek took advantage of the tensions he had himself created and asked the United States and Britain for more credits and more weapons, which he needed to assert his one-man rule in China. Speaking in New York in June 1943, Wellington Ku, the Chinese ambassador in London, said that unless Britain and the United States gave their full support to Chiang Kaishek, the war of liberation fought by the Chongqing troops against Japan could at any time end in disaster. And if that happened, the United States and Britain would lose an important staging area for their offensive against Japan.

Similar statements were made to American diplomats in Chongqing, which, in substance, amounted to rank blackmail.

General Stilwell repeatedly suggested that Chiang Kaishek and his generals re-organise the Guomindang's land forces so that they should have arms and equipment matching the weaponry of the Japanese. What he had in mind was to man the Guomindang army with contingents trained at special centres in the use of modern small arms, guns and mortars. Stilwell called their attention to the fact that the Guomindang armies had been inactive for a long time, that the Soviet and, in part, the American systems of automatic weapons (particularly the light and heavy machineguns) supplied to them since 1937 were being used in combat only 30 to 40 per cent, because neither the officers nor the men had been properly taught to handle them. For

the same reasons, only 45 to 47 per cent of the engineer equipment and materials and 28 to 33 per cent of the supplied motor vehicles were effectively operational. The Guomindang command gave very little thought to aligning the fighting efficiency of its army with the requirements of modern warfare, in spite of the fact that such modern armies as the American and the British sought to cooperate with it, while the weapons and equipment Chiang Kaishek had received from the USSR under a commercial agreement and was still receiving from the United States could, if properly used, have brought success. All that Chiang Kaishek needed to do was to mount actions against the Japanese invaders.

But the Guomindang leaders continued to press their demands for more supplies, especially after the return in late August 1943 of the Chongqing government's Foreign Minister Song Ziwen from Quebec where he had been invited by Roosevelt and Churchill to discuss Allied military and political strategy vis-à-vis Japan and China's role in this strategy. However, the Guomindang leaders remained true to themselves and continued their double-faced policy with regard to the Communist Party of China.

Speaking at the 11th plenary session of the Central Executive Committee of the Guomindang, which took place on September 6-13, 1943, and later at the session of the Third National Political Council which took place on September 18-27, 1943, Chiang Kaishek said the Communists had scuttled the war effort against Japan, that they were undermining the state's very foundations. He also claimed that the Guomindang was trying to resolve all party differences by political means, though at that very time a 200,000-strong army under Hu Zongnan was in contact with troops of the Nanking "national government" and with the Japanese on the right bank of the Huanghe in operation against the Shenganning guerilla region. Moreover, Chiang Kaishek stressed that the great powers—the United States and Great Britain—regarded precisely Chongqing China as their "great ally", and the Guomindang as the sole ruling party of China.

Tokyo closely followed the proceedings of the 11th plenary session of the Guomindang's Central Executive Committee and the National Political Council in Chongqing. The Japanese authorities knew that Chiang Kaishek was saying what played into

his hand and would then do something quite the opposite but beneficial to him.⁶³ They were still hoping that anticommunism would provide a common ground for cooperation between Tokyo and Chongqing.

Military Organisational Work of the CPC in Guerilla Areas in 1942-1943

1942 and 1943 were the most difficult period for the CPC and the local authorities in guerilla areas. The ring of the blockade had been tightened and punitive operations were more frequent, with both Japanese and Guomindang troops taking part in them. But this was not all. The passive defence of the bases, and the self-isolation of the 8th Route Army from the rest of the "outside perimeter" enabled the enemy to reinforce and tighten the blockade and sever links between the Shenganning and other guerilla areas and bases in North and Central China. The massive inflow of young people with strong anti-Japanese sentiments from enemy-occupied regions and areas controlled by the Guomindang had shrunk to a trickle.* In fact, newcomers had even become undesirable because they created additional food and employment problems. Nor was it possible to increase the number of troops—both regular and guerilla—because of the shortage of arms and ammunition. Local production facilities were primitive, while the opportunity of capturing arms and ammunition from the enemy was limited by the tight multi-echeloned blockade and the passive resistance tactics of the 8th Route Army and the guerilla troops.

In 1941 and 1942, the 8th Route Army used infiltration squads to enter enemy-held garrisons and establish contacts through local traders with patriotic generals and officers of the Guomindang army in order to buy weapons and ammunition from them. Often enough, arms and ammunition was purchased through trusted Chinese traders from Japanese logistics officers. But in 1943, after the redistribution of the armed forces for the "third anticommunist campaign" these channels of supply were blocked.

* In 1939-1940, an average of 40,000 men went to the guerilla regions in North China every year.

In this extremely tense military and political situation, with food supplies dropping to a critical point, every piece of news about Soviet military successes that reached the guerilla areas helped boost the morale of the Chinese patriots.

When news of the Soviet victory at Stalingrad and later in the Kursk Salient in the summer of 1943, reached Yan'an, the 8th Route Army and the guerillas intensified their operations against the besieging enemy with a measure of success. However, those were only sporadic and minor episodes that altered nothing in the general situation.*

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the Army command admitted the growing discontent among the population and among some of the army and guerilla commanders who thought it necessary to take the initiative in the field and to coordinate these actions with those of all the combatant antifascist forces, to exploit the contradictions and strife between the Chongqing and Nanking governments and their armies, the mounting anti-Japanese sentiment among the officers and men of the Guomindang armed forces to break the blockade, to win over these officers and men or at least to secure the lifting of the blockade around the guerilla areas. Those who called for more dynamic actions to break the blockade referred rightly to the favourable situation that resulted from the diversion of the attention and forces of the Japanese expeditionary army from China to the Pacific Theatre and to the anxiety among Japanese leaders over the Nazi defeats on the Soviet-German front in the winter of 1942/43 and summer of 1943.

But there was still another development that called for undelayed action. The reverses of the Allies in Burma (where nine Chinese divisions under generals Du Youming and Kang Lizhu and an Anglo-Indian force under Lieutenant-General T.J. Hutton, suffered a defeat) enabled the Japanese to reach the Burma-Yunnan railway, threatening to cut the supply line to China

* In those days the CPC tended to exaggerate the number of battles fought by the 8th Route and New 4th armies, and especially those fought by guerilla detachments and the local peasant militia. Since this number of "combat operations" included insignificant clashes, sometimes involving patrols or reconnaissance groups of up to ten men on both sides (most of the clashes were of this kind), one can easily judge the extent of such exaggerations.

via Burma.⁶⁴ This worsened the situation in Chongqing-controlled territory and raised hopes that the Guomindang would lose more of its influence among the mass of the Chinese people.

In February 1942, Mao Zedong and his closest associates decided to localise the sentiments by launching a campaign for the "rectification of the style of party work" (zhengfeng) and for eliminating "exponents of subjectivism and sectarianism", thereby distracting the attention of Communists inside and outside the army and focus it on the "study of Marxism" and on "criticism and self-criticism", which was all called "rectification of the style of party work" and "rectification of stereotypes in literature". The exigencies of the long siege and the threat of famine gave some ground to call for "reliance on our own forces", which implied turning the army and population in the guerilla areas into militarised worker detachments. The official explanation was that the very survival of these areas required that their residents should cultivate the soil, make homespun cotton cloth, mine coal, make pottery, etc. At the same time, Mao Zedong and his associates, who were trying to turn the liberated areas into what looked very much like a labour camp, could not ignore the constant threat from the joint forces of the Guomindang and the Japanese. They thought it necessary to rely on armed force to ward off possible political complications in the guerilla areas, considering the mixed social background of the population and the increasing infiltration of subversive anticommunist groups. Finally, the task was set to train reserves for the standing army, which would at a suitable time step in as the decisive force for winning power in the country.

This is why, in spite of the extremely tense situation, Mao and his associates set out to reorganise the armed forces in the guerilla regions and to establish military districts, each with an autonomous administration, headed by Mao Zedong's supporters.

The reorganisation was also intended to remove those commanders and political workers who were in opposition to Mao. Outwardly, the idea was presented as the "urgent need" to purge army detachments, especially those made up of deserters from the Guomindang (Chongqing) and puppet (Nanking) armies. Another "important task" was to improve ties between the anti-Japanese armed forces and local democratic bodies of government, and to tighten control over these bodies by the army

commanders who headed the armed struggle against the Japanese invaders and their Guomindang accomplices. In fact, the measure was aimed at giving the army legal rights to interfere in the affairs of local government bodies.

While acting on the principle of voluntary enlistment in both the army and guerilla detachments, military leaders in the liberated areas sought to maintain them at the strength authorised for units of the 8th Route and New 4th armies, for the guerilla columns and detachments, for detachments of the local peasant militia.

Measures were taken in every guerilla area to re-determine the boundaries of military-administrative districts, depending on the size of their territory and population. Each district had a number and was put under the authority of the military commander of a given guerilla region. Under him was a military-political council which included representatives of local bodies of the Communist Party of China and local democratic bodies of government. Military commanders of guerilla regions and the military-political councils were concerned with organisation, combat activities and recruiting for the regular troops, guerilla forces and the local peasant militia.⁶⁵

Military commanders, and the military-political councils of guerilla regions were subordinate to the Central Committee of the CPC and the Chief Military Council, both of which had their seat in Yan'an, and were accountable to them for their activities.

Early in 1943, the creation of military-administrative districts was completed, with some commanders of guerilla regions transferred and others appointed. Operating through the military-political councils, the army now had full control over the economic and political life of each military-administrative district.

Units of the 8th Route and New 4th armies were formally subordinate to the military-administrative districts in which they were stationed. But since troops of the "regular" army were not stationed in all guerilla regions and bases, their redistribution provided for the stationing of at least one regiment of regular troops in each military-administrative district. South Hebei, for example, had seven military-administrative districts, with one regiment of the 8th Route Army in each; Taihangshan had eight military-administrative districts; and the Taiwo base had four.

To avoid fragmentation of brigades of the 8th Route and divisions of the New 4th armies, it was allowed to station two or three regiments in one military-administrative district. As a result, there were 15 regiments in Taihangshan and nine regiments in Taiwo.⁶⁶

The Shandong guerilla region had six military-administrative districts: the first (South Shandong, Lunan) district, the second (East Shandong, Jiaodun) district, the third (Shandong-Hebei, Jilongbian) border district, the fourth (Qinghe river) district, the fifth (Central Shandong, Luzhong) district, and sixth Maritime or Binghai district. These military districts comprised 93 counties and 700 prefectures.

The affairs of each military-administrative district were run by a provisional military-administrative department. The counties were administered by elected democratic governments, the prefectures by councils of deputies, and villages by local elders and local councils of deputies.⁶⁷

Each military-administrative district was assigned defensive tasks, the specific troop disposition and strength of its armed force. The first military-administrative district, for example (population about 500,000), had 7,000 troops of the 115th division of the 8th Route Army, 15,400 guerillas, and 67,900 men of the local peasant militia. The second district (population about 14 million) had 24,000 troops of the 115th Division of the 8th Route Army, 45,200 guerillas and 160,000 men of the local peasant militia. The third district (population some 1.7 million) had about 7,000 troops of the 115th Division of the 8th Route Army, 14,200 guerillas, and more than 16,000 men of the local peasant militia. The fourth district (population nearly 1,000,000) had 8,000 troops of the 8th Route Army, 12,700 guerillas and about 10,000 men of the local peasant militia. The fifth military district (population about 800,000) had 15,000 troops of the 8th Route Army, nearly 11,000 guerillas and more than 30,000 men of the local peasant militia. The sixth district (population more than 1,000,000) had 4,500 troops of the 8th Route Army, about 7,000 guerillas and more than 20,000 men of the local peasant militia.⁶⁸

* Operating in the fourth, fifth and sixth military-administrative districts were some units of the 8th Route Army, made up of guerillas and headed by commanders trained and screened in Yan'an.

The numerous armed clashes with Guomindang and Japanese punitive detachments, the well-organised guerilla raids on enemy communications and garrisons yielded a certain amount of captured arms and ammunition. Each ten-man section of the 8th Route Army had 3-4 rifles or carbines in good repair, a platoon had one light machinegun; each regiment had a machinegun company (4-6 heavy machineguns) and a grenade-launcher platoon (3-4 grenade-launchers).⁶⁹

Political instruction in platoons was provided by a literate Communist specially trained for this purpose. In companies this job was done by a political officer, in battalions by a political instructor, and in regiments and divisions by political commissars and special political departments (PD).

A political department included the PD chief, an organiser of propaganda and cultural activities among the local population and soldiers, an organiser of propaganda work among enemy troops, the secretary of the party organisation of a regiment or division.

Special teams of well trained soldiers led by Communists were formed in companies, battalions and divisions to conduct political work and propaganda among the local population.⁷⁰

The command of military-administrative districts relied mostly on units of the 8th Route and New 4th armies, on their commanders and political workers. Guerilla troops and the peasant militia were not formally subordinate to the 8th Route Army command, but came under its orders because they fought and patrolled the boundaries of the base and its installations under the guidance and supervision of the commanders and soldiers of the "regular" units. To make the military command more effective and to train reserves for a future multi-million regular army, guerilla columns and detachments were reorganised in line with a table of organisation and equipment worked out in Yan'an.

Previous to that reorganisation, guerilla units had no fixed authorised strength. The strength of a guerilla column, for example, ranged from one to several thousand soldiers. With the introduction of the new table of organisation, a guerilla column had an authorised strength equalling that of a division, a combined guerilla detachment was in strength equal to a regiment, a large guerilla detachment had the same strength as a battalion, a medium-sized guerilla detachment was equal to a company

in strength, and a small guerilla detachment to a platoon. The authorised strength of a combined guerilla detachment was 1,262 to 1,589 men, a large guerilla detachment 531-614 men, and a middle-sized guerilla detachment 115-128 men.⁷¹

The local peasant militia was also reorganised in accordance with an Yan'an table of organisation and equipment. Every military-administrative district had several large detachments (of battalion strength), a county had medium-sized detachments (of company strength), prefectures had small detachments (of platoon strength), and small populated centres (villages) had sub-detachments (equalling a section). The strength of a large detachment was 800-1,000 men, a medium-sized detachment 136-200 men, a small detachment 15-30 men, and a sub-detachment 10-15 men.⁷² Commanders in the company-battalion bracket as a rule came from the 8th Route Army after careful screening.

The guerilla troops and men of the peasant militia were divided by age groups so that each could carry his load of fighting in accordance with his physical ability. In the militia three types of detachments were set up (by age groups): the first type, Quingniantuan, made up of young people of 18-25 years of age; the second, Jiwantuan, of young people of 25-35 years of age, and the third, Putongtuan, of people over 35 years of age.

Enlisted in local peasant militia were men aged 18 to 35, who did not discontinue their jobs. The commanders of such detachments were usually elected at detachment meetings. As a rule, a large detachment was commanded by the chairman of the local democratic government.

In the course of the reorganisation, the total strength of the 8th Route and New 4th armies, together with their training centres and logistic bodies was reduced from 500,000 to 300,000; the personnel of the military and civilian administration was reduced by nearly 25 per cent.⁷³ The large number of military personnel released through this reorganisation was used to tighten political control over all aspects of local life and activity and to enhance the combat efficiency of the peasant militia.

However, the reorganisation of the army could not improve the dire plight of guerilla-controlled areas. It merely created the appearance of stabilisation of the situation; still, it strengthened the position of the army, and raised its political role there.

Under the guise of "rectifying the style of party work" and combatting "subjectivism and sectarianism" Mao Zedong and his associates purged from the party all supporters of active fighting and cooperation by all patriotic forces in the country, and those who advocated the abidance by the standards of the united anti-Japanese front. Officially, the purge applied to those who had "by accident or with hostile intent wormed their way into the party".⁷⁴ The percentage of party members in the army shrank considerably. In many army units party organisations dissolved automatically, while the remaining ones were made up exclusively of peasants who had a rather vague idea about politics, the programme of the Party, and its tasks.

Liu Bocheng wrote: "At the end of 1942, the regular forces were 40 per cent communist, guerilla forces 25 per cent, and the forces of the local peasant self-defence force 14.2 per cent communist. There were about 25,000 Communists in the guerilla forces."⁷⁵

By the middle of 1943, the reorganisation of the army, the guerilla forces and the peasant militia in North China had been completed.

By July 1943 the correlation of forces in the guerilla regions of South Hebei, Taihangshan and Taiwo was as follows:⁷⁶

	"Regular" forces	Guerilla	Local peasant militia	Total
South Hebei	16,430	11,802	167,287	195,519
Taihangshan	24,748	9,144	165,287	199,179
Taiwo	10,505	5,436	26,993	42,934
T o t a l	51,683	26,382	359,567	437,632

The New 4th Army, operating in specific conditions in Central China, had seven divisions (164 regiments) as before. Here, too, attempts were made to introduce a fixed structure, with three battalions in a regiment, three companies in a battalion, three platoons in a company, three sections in a platoon, and ten men in a section. According to the table of organisation and

equipment, each company was to have three machineguns, a battalion—a machinegun company, a regiment—a machinegun company and an artillery battery of 2-3 guns. According to the table of organisation and equipment, the strength of a regiment was to be 3,000 officers and men. The army command saw to it that personnel was trained to command new army units, big and small. Special training battalions of 6-7 companies were set up at divisional headquarters and company, platoon and section commanders were trained.⁷⁷

Training and retraining of regiment, battalion and artillery battery commanders and staff personnel were organised directly at the army headquarters. Guerilla commanders and political workers for administrative bodies of guerilla areas were also trained at army headquarters. The training was of three months' duration in training battalions and of six months' duration at the army school. The military academy in Yan'an trained senior commanding officers for the New 4th Army.⁷⁸

From 1941 on, a radio communications training department was opened at the army school of the New 4th Army. Army HQ maintained radio communications with regimental headquarters. In addition, the army HQ had a transceiver to maintain direct communications with Central Headquarters in Yan'an.

Nominally, officers and men of the 8th Route and New 4th armies were to be supplied food, clothing and footwear, in accordance with established rations.

In fact, however, this was not always the case, with army personnel often being short of food and especially clothing. According to established rations, every soldier was entitled to a daily 1.5 pounds of rice, 18 liang of vegetables, 3 qiang of salt, 3 qiang of vegetable oil, and two pounds of meat.^{*79} Every year, a soldier was supposed to be issued two uniforms (winter and summer), two sets of underwear, 3-4 pairs of shoes, and two pairs of socks. In summer, soldiers were expected to weave sandals from rice straw. However, the actual supply of food and clothing fell far short of these rations because of logistic problems. When not in action, the troops were required to engage in purely civilian occupation such as fishing and woodcutting, to work the land and in this way provide themselves with food, help the local

population to take in the harvest, cultivate the land, build homes, etc.

On the whole in 1942-1943 all military-organisational and propaganda activities of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and of the military command in guerilla regions were directed "inwards" and had little effect on the war against the Japanese. In fact, on the plea that "China's specific conditions so required", their activities were essentially directed against Communists and soldiers that displayed an internationalist spirit and thought it was wrong to renounce further attempts at consolidating the united anti-Japanese national front, and at maintaining cooperation with the international antifascist movement, primarily with the Soviet Union. The reorganisation of the army and the military-administrative management in guerilla regions widened the rift between the regular form of army organisation and guerilla form of military operations, and sharpened the contradiction between the purely military tasks that arose and the economic tasks which the Yan'an leaders set to the army. The army became "heavier" because Mao Zedong and his supporters in the Central Committee of the CPC used it as a military, political and economic organisation, depreciating its main function of an army of national liberation. The heavy emphasis that Chinese propaganda placed on Mao Zedong's claim that China's Communists could *themselves* solve all problems facing the country and the people, that all other parties and organisations could not do this because they were parties of the bourgeoisie and of the landowners, or simply because they were nothing but national traitors, was instrumental in knocking together a united anti-communist front of the Chongqing and Nanking cliques of the Guomindang, a front supported by the Japanese aggressors. The ring of the blockade was tightening round the guerilla regions, and the situation was becoming increasingly grave.

* Liang≈37.301 gr.; qiang≈3.7301 gr.

Chapter 5

The Wartime Economy of Japan and China

From 1942 Japan's entire economy was put behind the war effort on land and sea over thousands of miles of the front. The requirements of the army, navy and air force in weapons, equipment and especially transport facilities, were growing due to the overextended communications and frontline, which led to greater economic difficulties.

The Wartime Economy of Japan

In September 1943, Premier Tojo abolished the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the cabinet's Planning Bureau, and established a Ministry for Armaments under his personal direction. The functions of this new ministry included control over industrial production, distribution of raw materials and the workforce, placement of military orders, promotion of research into military technology, etc. The new ministry thus became "a government within the government".*

To help the ministry perform its functions, the government amended the law on military-industrial companies which had been in force since October 1942. The newly amended law gave the military-industrial companies preferential rights to orders, to raw materials and to skilled labour. By the end of 1943 there were 150 military-industrial companies in Japan, as compared with 38 in September 1942. These companies particularly mushroomed after the government announced that "special rights and state guarantees" would be given to Japanese companies operating in Korea, Manchuria and the occupied territories of Southeast Asia.¹

* Significantly, the staff of the new ministry had, by the end of 1943 grown to over 14,500, whereas that of the Ministry of Trade and Industry had been a mere 3,200.

The government also decided to extend substantial credits to these companies from the "emergency expenditures" fund, and began making advance payment for military orders. Advance payments in the aircraft industry, shipbuilding and specialised machine-building now amounted to 50-70 per cent of total invested capital.²

In 1943-1944, the Japanese war industry considerably increased production, as may be seen from the following data on the growth of industrial output (1937 = 100%)³:

	1938	1943	1944
Manufacturing industry as a whole	131.3	113.5	86.1
Industrial plants filling orders for the War and Naval Ministry	352.0	1,805.0	2,316.0

Great increases were registered in the production capacity of arms manufacturing plants, which were directly subordinate to the War Ministry and Ministry of the Navy.*

* By 1944, the War Ministry was in charge of eight arsenals (45 plants): First Tokyo Arsenal with seven plants (1st, 2nd, 3rd, Sendai, Oomiya, Kawagoe, Osugi); Second Tokyo arsenal with 11 plants (Itabashi, Iwabana, Uji, Tadaumi, Tama, Sone, Sasato, Sakanoshi, Arao, Fukaya, Kushino); Sakata Arsenal with two munitions factories (No. 1 and 2); Nagoya Arsenal with 7 plants (Atsuta, Takazu, Toriimatsu, Yanagizawa, Kusunoki, Toshikawa, Chisato); Osaka Arsenal with 8 plants (Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, Harima, Iwami, Shirogama, Hirokata); Kokura Arsenal with five plants (Nos. 1, 2, 3, Haru, Itoguchiyama); Arsenal of the Korean group of Japanese forces with two plants (No. 1 and Hirakai); Arsenal of the Japanese Kwantung Army in Manchuria with three plants (Nos. 1, 2, 3).

The Ministry of the Navy had its own wharves for building and repairing ships in Yokosuka, Kure, Sasebo, Maizuru, Hiroshi, Toyokawa, Mitsu, Suzuka, Takashiro, Sakata, Numazaki and Kawazuki, and a plant for assembly and repair of aviation equipment in Takao, for naval engineering equipment in Otani, Nakaumi and Takao, ammunition and mines depots Nos. 1, 2, and 3, warehouses, laboratories Nos. 1 and 2, an aviation depot, and storehouses Nos. 1, 2, 11, 12, 21, 22, 31, 41, 51, and 61.

See Shotaro Maenaga, *Showa sangyo shi* (An Industrial History of the Showa Period), Vol. 1, pp. 462-464.

The rate of increase in the military hardware output at enterprises of the War and Naval Ministries in 1937 and in the 1942-1944 period may be seen from the following figures:⁴

Most of the war production went to the navy which bore the brunt of the struggle against the United States, and to the armed forces fighting on land in the Pacific Theatre.

	1937	1942	1943	1944
<i>Production facilities of the War Ministry</i>				
Rifles	42,754	440,000	630,000	826,749
Machineguns	2,294	21,906	21,746	19,344
Field cannon	373	3,788	3,016	1,502
AA-guns	105	644	1,514	1,031
Tanks	325	1,165	776	382
Armoured cars	88	505	385	126
Tow and other tractors	97	1,481	870	789
Other transport vehicles	57	442	615	725
Big and medium-sized radio stations	146	190	1,105	1,360
Small radio stations	700	800	3,140	3,650
Explosives (tons)	8,240	26,512	28,196	28,634
Ammunition (tons)	2,417	12,502	12,249	11,755

Production facilities of the Naval Ministry

Ships	number	23	59	77	248
	tons (deadweight)	51,724	230,724	145,760	408,818
Naval artillery		136	248	685	1,153
AA-guns		130	303	934	1,004
Machineguns		1,350	15,015	34,305	86,170
All types of ammunition (thous. rounds)		8,487	71,647	106,341	144,134
Torpedoes		250	1,100	1,400	1,700
Airborne torpedoes		308	1,200	2,340	8,633
Marine mines		8,200	81,216	82,000	235,497
Air bombs		7,730	114,380	201,070	243,550
Gunpowder and explosives (tons)		9,649	28,457	31,129	40,935
Acoustic instruments		—	338	1,450	8,983
Radiotelegraphic equipment		600	3,319	5,292	10,204
Electric motors		40	155	280	545
Other types of equipment		120	465	690	960

	1937	1942	1943	1944
<i>Aircraft industry</i>				
Aircraft				
land-based	600	5,839	10,182	13,235
naval	980	4,346	9,846	13,272
Engines for:				
land-based aircraft	—	9,824	18,174	20,016
naval aircraft	—	8,674	17,194	20,258

The Japanese army in China practically did not receive new weapons: Japanese divisions operating in China in 1944 were fitted out with the same artillery systems, the same small arms and the same transport vehicles that they had when they started the war in July 1937. There was only a partial replacement of the Japanese aircraft after 1938 when Soviet volunteer pilots first appeared in the China skies in their modern fighter planes.

The growing volume of war production required a large amount of coal, crude oil, iron ore, non-ferrous metal ore, rubber, and other raw materials that Japan was short of. When the Japanese aggressors were starting the war in China they expected an easy victory, which would let them seize China's rich natural resources.

Hoping for a "swift victory" the Japanese General Staff made an estimate of what the army and navy would need for the war and how these needs could be met out of the reserves of strategic raw materials made in 1931-1936.

As the war in China dragged on, the Konoye government passed a law on general mobilisation in September 1938, and later, in 1939 and 1940, introduced several amendments to the mobilisation law with the aim of further militarising Japan's national economy.

The raw materials problem became particularly acute after the outbreak of the war in the Pacific. Japanese statesmen and military leaders hoped that "as early as 1942 the Empire will be able to obtain oil, metal ores, coal and rubber through its cooperation with the South Sea countries (meaning the countries of South and Southeast Asia—B.S.) and will square its mighty shoulders, continue to carry its burden and pursue its noble goal—the libe-

ration of Asia".⁵ But these expectations collapsed. By March 1942, it is true, the Japanese army and navy had seized a vast territory of over 2.2 million square kilometres with a population of 105.8 million and with tremendous reserves of food and strategic materials.⁶ It is also true, however, that in the course of the fighting many of the ore and coal mines, oil extraction facilities, factories and plantations in the occupied countries were either destroyed or damaged, with stocks of finished products partially destroyed, but even so, the remaining resources would satisfy Japan's needs. However, the main problem was how to transport available strategic raw materials and foodstuffs to Japan, Korea, Manchuria, or at least to China for the large contingent of Japanese forces. Thus, transportation was the main problem. It was necessary for Japan to ensure the normal functioning not only of the main lines of communication, but also lines of communication in occupied countries. Japan, which claimed to be fighting for a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere felt constrained to show at least some sort of concern for its future protectorates. Burma, French Indochina and Thailand had plenty of rice and other cereals, whereas the Philippines, Malaya and the Dutch East Indies had almost none. Bottoms to carry this produce were lacking because the British and the local guerillas had sunk almost the entire coasting fleet and blown up almost all bridges and crossing facilities. According to the Japanese, more than two-thirds of the tonnage in the Southeast Asian countries had been blown up or sunk.

Late in 1942, the Japanese press wrote that after Japan had occupied a considerable part of Southeast Asia and many of the Pacific islands, it found itself about 15 million reg. gross tons short of the tonnage it needed to ensure normal transportation of cargoes.⁷

That was Japan's weakness, and the USA did not fail to take advantage of it. One of the main strategic US goals in 1942-1943 was to win command of the sea and air in order to hit Japanese communications, particularly sea communications, and in this way foil Japan's plans of prompt and effective use of the raw material and food resources of occupied countries.

Beginning in the autumn of 1942, when Japanese communications stretched from Yokohama to Luzon and from Port Arthur to Saigon, the US command ordered its Navy and Air Force to

sink Japanese transports and destroy Japanese airfields, including those in Japan proper. The Americans began building airfields in southwestern districts of China, particularly those adjacent to Burma, and also in the east, in the coastal areas of Zhejiang (Chekiang) and Jingxi (Kiangsi) provinces for their B-17 and B-25 bombers.

By the summer of 1943, the US Air Force and Navy had now command of the Pacific. The destruction wreaked on the Japanese transport fleet (excluding tankers) may be seen from the following figures (gross tons)⁸

	Built or captured	Sunk or blown up	Absolute losses	Afloat by the end of year	%%
By the beginning of the war in the Pacific	—	—	—	6,384.0	100.0
By the end of December 1941	44.2	51.6	-7.4	6,376.6	99.0
By the end of 1942	661.8	1,095.8	-434.0	5,942.6	93.0
By the end of 1943	1,067.1	2,065.7	-998.6	4,944.0	77.0
By the end of 1944	1,735.1	4,115.1	-2,380.0	2,564.0	44.0
By the end of 1945	465.0	1,562.1	-1,097.1	1,526.9	24.0

Thus, Japan was not able to make full use of the food resources and raw materials it had captured in Southeast Asia. It was made to rely mainly on its own resources. In October 1942, less than a year after the war in the Pacific had started, Japan passed a law on mobilising additional resources for the war effort. In the subsequent years (1943-1944), this law was supplemented by a number of other laws which still further regimented production and consumption in the country. Parallel with these austerity measures the Japanese engaged in downright plunder of Korea and Manchuria.*

* Even before the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union (1941-1945), the Japanese leaders carried on preparations for a war against the Soviet Union and the Mongolian People's Republic and set up on Manchurian territory not only a military springboard, but the second largest military-industrial base after Japan itself. Significantly, even in 1944-1945, US bombers (based in China) and carrier-based aircraft of the US Seventh Fleet, within reaching distance of Japanese

military targets in Manchuria, never attacked targets inside the Andong-Shengyang-Fuxin-Anshan area, with the result that the military-industrial base in South Manchuria—from 1943 until early in August 1945, when the USSR entered the war against Japan—uninterruptedly provided not only the Kwantung Army but also the Japanese forces in the Pacific with war materiel. "In the 1940s, Manchuria was the most developed military-industrial centre in China. Suffice it to say that it had 82 per cent of China's proven deposits of iron ore, about 93 per cent of combustible shale, 100 per cent of aluminium shale, 100 per cent of magnesite, and 100 per cent of uranium..." (O. Borisov, *Sovetsky Soyuz i manchzhurskaya revoliutsionnaya baza* [Soviet Union and the Manchurian Revolutionary Base], Moscow, 1977, p. 49). The author notes that in extraction of basic types of raw materials and production of metals Manchuria accounted for by far the biggest share in China: 45 per cent of coal, 52 of iron ore, 100 of copper (metal), 76 of lead (metal) and zinc (metal), 100 of aluminium, 100 of magnesium, and 33 of salt. Hence Manchuria's industrial base covered a considerable portion of Japan's military needs in raw materials. The principal centre of Manchuria's war industry was the Mukden (Shenyang) area which had more than 60 per cent of all munitions plants. The Shenyang Arsenal had subsidiaries in Luoyang, Qiqihar, Harbin, and Dalny (Dalian). The plants in Shenyang and their subsidiaries manufactured small arms and cannon, ammunition, engineering equipment, tanks, armoured cars and tractors. "In 1944, when the Pacific campaign was at its height, Manchuria manufactured 1,100 combat aircraft (I-91) and transport planes of different Japanese types, plus 2,200 aircraft engines, which constituted 10 per cent of Japan's total annual output of aircraft and aircraft engines" (Op. cit., pp. 56-57). It should be pointed out here that the Japanese arsenals in Manchuria were equipped with adequate repair facilities manned by skilled workers, engineers and technicians brought from Japan under a labour mobilisation scheme. The history of western colonisation of China in this century is marked by numerous inter-imperialist differences, notably between Japan and the United States, and Japan and Germany over Manchuria. In the course of the war against Japan (1937-1945), and especially at the closing stages of World War II, US high-ranking officers and diplomats in Nanking, and later in Chongqing, tried to get the Chiang Kaishek reactionaries to seize Manchuria as part of the postwar settlement, and then open the doors for US corporations to this land so rich in raw materials and man-power resources. It must be said that when the Japanese leaders noticed the growing anti-Sovietism of the White House at the end of World War II, they had high hopes of entering into separate collusion with the US imperialists. With this purpose in mind Japan "intended to offer the American corporations its cooperation in developing the natural riches of China, and primarily that of Manchuria. The Japanese leaders were banking heavily on a possible deterioration of Soviet-American relations. If this happened, Manchuria, which

Resorting more and more often to these violent practices, they confiscated all that could be used as raw materials for the war industry. The commander of the Kwantung Army in Manchuria, for example, issued an order banning, on pain of arrest and a big fine, the setting up of metal monuments and metal fences at cemeteries, the manufacture of cutlery and metal utensils. In fact, such monuments and metal fences that had existed priorly were removed as scrap. The peasants were told to turn in farm implements made of metal "for defence needs" and to use wooden ploughs, they were also advised to wear and present wooden finger rings instead of gold, silver or copper rings. Similar laws and orders were issued in Japan proper, where various "patriotic leagues serving the throne" collected anything of use for the manufacture of weapons, ammunition and war materiel.

When the free sale of artificial fertiliser, farm implements and seed was stopped, and the shortage of labour depressed farming in spite of the migration from cities and towns to the countryside, the production of rice, vegetables and other food crops went down steadily. What made things worse was the fact that peasants were made to grow industrial crops for the manufacture of war materiel and clothing. To do so, peasants needed not only extra skill and knowledge, but also farm implements and fertilisers which were practically impossible to get. Significantly, agricultural production shot up in 1940 by 6 per cent over the previous year, whereas in 1943 it dropped by 4 per cent and in 1944 by 22 per cent.⁹ The livestock population shrank considerably: sheep from 196,000 head in 1940 to 150,000 in 1945; pigs from 798,000 in 1940 to 206,000 in 1945; poultry from 45.2 million in 1940 to 22.5 million in 1944.¹⁰

All this badly worsened the food situation in 1942-1944. In addition to introducing food rationing in 1941, the government closed restaurants and other places of entertainment. It encouraged in every way the collection of foodstuffs, clothes and medicines that people received for their ration cards, as their gifts to the army.

The food ration of a Japanese adult (of 18 and older) was re-

had a long border with the Soviet Union would be bound to attract the attention of the American military, who might want to use Japan's experience and create a springboard for anti-Soviet and anti-communist actions there". (DMA, reg. 32, case 654/K, file 217, sheet 61).

Employment Structure of the Japanese Economy (thousand people)

	By October 1, 1940			By February 20, 1944		
	total	men	women	total	men	women
Total population	73,114	36,566	36,548	77,044	38,605	38,439
including:						
Armed forces	1,694	1,694	—	3,980	3,980*	—
Civilian population	71,420	34,872	36,548	73,064	34,625	38,439
Employed in the economy	32,483	19,730	12,753	31,797	18,443	13,354
including:						
farming	13,842	6,619	7,223	13,376	5,569	7,807
fishing	543	476	67	464	380	84
extractive industries	598	529	69	805	681	124
manufacturing and construction	8,132	6,178	1,954	9,494	7,243	2,251
Trade	4,882	3,006	1,876	2,364	1,127	1,235
Transport and communications	1,364	1,214	150	1,650	1,385	265
Office employees and self-employed	2,195	1,515	680	2,900	1,895	1,005
Cottage industry	709	39	670	473	58	415
Other occupations	218	154	64	131	73	58
Not engaged in production	38,937	15,142	23,795	41,267	16,182	25,085

* The figures for the size of the army and navy are clearly minimised. In early September 1945, the Japanese armed forces numbered about 7 million. *Istoriya vtoroi mirovoi voyny* (A History of the Second World War), Vol. 11, Moscow, 1980, p. 174.

duced from 1,900 calories a day in 1940 to 1,730 calories in 1943. Many essentials and foodstuffs which had been rationed officially were not issued in stores and could only be bought, if at all, at exorbitant prices in the black market. For example, with the official price of 3.8 yen for a pound of butter it cost 6.5 yen in the black market. One *kan* (7.75 kg) of sugar officially cost 2.2 yen, whereas in the black market it cost 50 yen.¹¹ Civilian consumption of textile wares in 1944 was a mere 7.4 per cent of the 1937 level.¹² Malnutrition pushed up the mortality rate. In Tokyo, for example, it rose from 13 (per 1,000 population) in 1938 to 22.6 in 1943; in Osaka the figures were respectively 13.4 and 25.7.¹³ The huge army and labour conscription were a drain on the workforce, especially on skilled workers. The government issued laws on the mobilisation of women, students and even adolescents for work in industry. As for using foreign workers, Japan, unlike Nazi Germany, drew its additional labour from Korea and partially from among Chinese prisoners-of-war. The Japanese authorities believed that as Korea had been part of the Japanese Empire since 1910, Koreans had received a "Japanese education" and were therefore sufficiently reliable to take part in the struggle for a "new order" in Asia. Chinese POWs, who came mostly from Manchuria, were used in coal and ore mines (mostly in Hokkaido) and were kept in near-by camps. These measures yielded results.

The difficult economic situation was exacerbated by the mass migration of the urban population to rural areas. Suffice it to say that in 1943 alone more than 3.8 million people left the cities.¹⁴ By February 1944, the workforce structure in the manufacturing industry was as follows: factory and office workers with many years of service—20 per cent; workers drafted into industry during the war—45 per cent; college students and pupils—10 per cent; criminals sentenced to various terms of forced labour—9 per cent; Korean workers brought from the continent—8 per cent; drafted women—4 per cent; POWs—3 per cent; Chinese workers brought from the continent—1 per cent.¹⁵ Out of 1.5 million workers in the shipbuilding, aircraft and oil refining industries, 500,000, i.e. one-third, had been drafted into the army and replaced by women, adolescents, and college students by 1944.¹⁶ This led to a sharp drop in labour productivity and an increase in spoilage. In the steel industry, a steel-maker produc-

ed, on the average, 54 tons of steel in 1941, and only 21 in 1944. The coal output went down from 227 tons per coalminer in 1933 to 164 tons in 1944.¹⁷ The overtaking of the Japanese economy led to an increasing lag in the production of armaments and equipment. For this the Japanese command paid with the lives of thousands of officers and men. Japanese propaganda spurned "fetishisation of arms" and tried to prove that victory could be won through self-sacrifice, pitting the superior Japanese spirit against modern machines.¹⁸ That was the voice of despair, the kind of propaganda that enlisted more kamikazes, who sacrificed their lives to block the way to tanks, planes and warships. As a result, a record number of Japanese officers and men, especially air pilots, sacrificed their lives in 1944. A report of Emperor's GHQ on military operations in June 1944 estimated Japanese air force losses at 369 aircraft—"of which 342 were destroyed in ramming attacks . . . and 27 were destroyed on land".¹⁹ This was followed by a list of kamikazes who, on their commanders' orders, became "animated explosive devices for annihilating enemy planes or ships". On November 1, 1944, Japanese newspapers put out "extras" glorifying a kamikaze attack on an enemy sea convoy and its escort in Layte Bay. As a result, five enemy ships—two battleships, two cruisers and one destroyer—were seriously damaged.²⁰ The newspaper reports said nothing of the fate of the 217 kamikazes who had taken part in the attack, as it was quite obvious that all of them were dead.

The Economic Situation in Guomintang China

In mid-November 1944, an American economic delegation* arrived in Chongqing after acquainting themselves with the situation in the Guangxi and Guizhou provinces.

In 1943-1944, the situation in the regions under the Chongqing government's control was nothing less than grim. In fact it was so dramatic that the US press wrote about the possibility

* This group of American economic experts was headed, on Roosevelt's personal instructions, by Donald Nelson, one of the organisers of the war time industry in the United States. It was made up of 70 advisers and experts in all branches of military production. See *China Handbook, 1937-1945* New York, 1947, p. 366.

of hunger riots and broad popular opposition to the Chongqing government. Journalists also thought the Japanese might take advantage of the situation and "slam a Japanese lid upon the seething Chinese pot".

The Roosevelt Administration exerted great efforts, from the autumn of 1943 through 1944, to bolster Chiang Kaishek and his regime. However, the American policy-makers were worried not so much about the plans of the Japanese expeditionary forces in China in 1943-1944 and the persistent efforts by Japanese diplomacy to make peace with Chiang Kaishek, as about the situation over a longer term: who would China side with after the war? Would it break away from American influence? This was why the US government, while giving its support to Chiang Kaishek, was also keeping a watchful eye on the situation and the general mood in Yan'an. Feigning interest in the "achievements in the liberated areas" the Americans sent numerous "goodwill" missions there made up of statesmen and political leaders, scientists and journalists. Many of them declared that they were going to Yan'an "to study the options for setting up coalition bodies for waging the war against the Japanese aggressor and for finding common ground for peace between the Guomintang and the Communist Party".²¹ In actual fact, most of them were making a thorough study of Yan'an's potentialities in the event of a civil war.

After examining the situation in the guerilla regions and in the Chongqing-controlled territory, the Americans came to the discouraging conclusion that, unless urgent and effective measures were taken in support of the Chongqing regime, it would collapse and leave the stage to the Communists.

At that time, the Chongqing authorities knew very little about the plight of the urban and rural population in the central, western and southwestern provinces still under the Guomintang government's control. The governors and officials of the local administrative apparatus here did not last long in their posts and used their brief tenure in office for personal gain. This did not deter them from sending official dispatches to the capital that everything was all right, that the population was "loyal" to Chiang Kaishek and the Guomintang, and saying nothing about the tragedy of the Chinese people, about their abysmal poverty, hunger and ruin.

The loss of Peking, Tientsin (Tientsin), Nanking, Shanghai, Hankou, Wuchang, Hanyang, Nanchang and other cities on the Huanghe and Yangzi to the Japanese deprived China of its industrial base.* This meant that China had no source of what it took to fight a war—no source of weapons, ammunition, materiel, equipment, vehicles and medical supplies—other than its allies' who were themselves under a great strain owing to the military operations in Europe, Africa and the Pacific.

The Chiang Kaishek government attempted to set up some of the most essential military-industrial enterprises and munition factories, particularly plants for the assembly and repair of arms and equipment which, together with military vehicles and aircraft, were coming from the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union. But the Chongqing government had neither engineers nor skilled workers and was badly lacking in funds for industrial development, simply because colossal sums were spent on the huge repressive military and police apparatus and a ponderous bureaucracy. As for private entrepreneurs, the few contracts for military projects that the government had the money for were seized by China's biggest monopolies, the so-called "four families" closely related by family ties to Chiang Kaishek.** Other Chinese entrepreneurs and banks were afraid to start major mili-

* The Chinese government proved to be totally unable, in the face of the advancing enemy, to evacuate industrial enterprises to new places and to start military production at once there. Those Shanghai entrepreneurs who fled from the aggressors could not think of anything better than to have tens of thousands of coolies carry the plant and equipment of their factories out of the city, or have part of this equipment loaded into small river boats and taken up the Yangzi. Much of this equipment was lost on the way and the rest arrived in incomplete sets or was captured by the Japanese en route. According to the headquarters of the Japanese forces in Shanghai, during the fighting for this city the Chinese authorities succeeded in evacuating 76 enterprises (seven metalworking plants, 21 engineering plants, three chemical plants, 28 textile mills and 17 other enterprises). However, handbooks issued later by the Chongqing government mention only 16 enterprises, which were re-started in Jiujiang and Nanching, but were captured by the Japanese in the 1939 campaign.

** However, these "four families" soon deported most of their capital in US banks in view of the fluid military and political situation in the country.

tary industrial projects without credits and subsidies from the government.

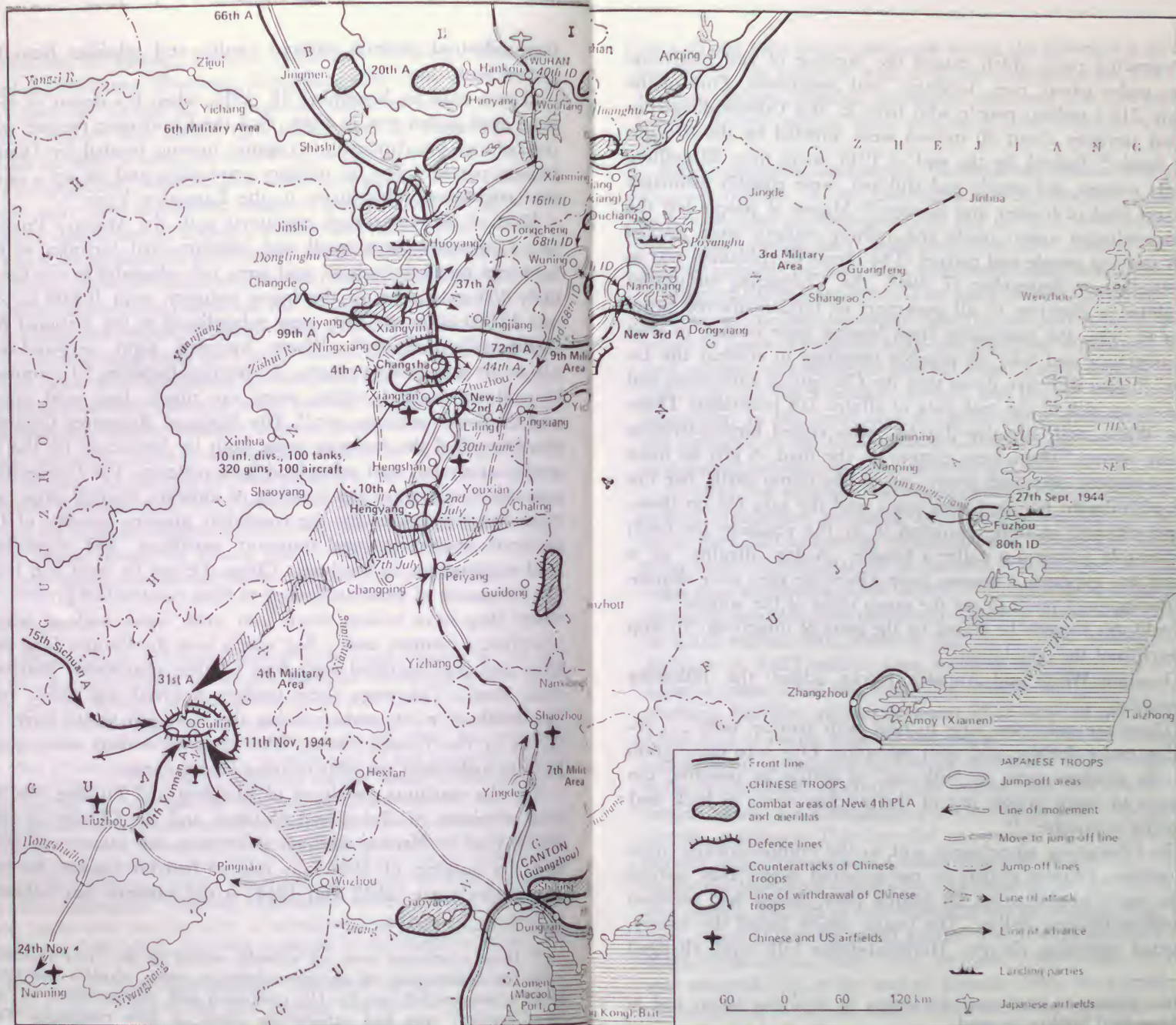
It was only on November 16, 1944, when the defeat of Germany and Japan was in sight, that the Chongqing regime, with the help of an American economic mission headed by Donald Nelson, passed a law on military production and set up a pertinent committee subordinate to the Executive Yuan.²²

Most of the enterprises registered with the Military Production Committee were small and medium-sized factories of the food and textile industries, and were not adaptable to war needs. Only 103 enterprises of the heavy industry, with 16,000 factory and 12,000 office workers, were subordinate to the National Resources Commission.* These included eight iron-and-steel plants, six engineering plants, 20 chemical factories, 19 coalmines, two oil-extracting facilities, seven ore mines, four gold mines, and 21 power stations, etc.²³ The National Resources Commission controlled the factories being built by Americans for the assembly of aircraft and other lend-lease materiel. The Commission was also in charge of the building of airfields, landing strips, garages and storehouses for the constantly growing number of US air units, engineering and transport personnel, and supervised road construction in Southwest China. Driven by want and hunger, thousands of peasants flocked to these construction projects,** where they were broken down into work crews, each of which was given a number and a flag which bore the Guomindang emblem and was inscribed with four Chinese characters "patriotic work crew". The wage these workers received was about one-hundredth of what workers doing the same job would have received in the United States. The Chinese workers were quartered in make-shift barracks forming labour camps.

For the maritime provinces of Zhejiang and Fujiang, the inland provinces of Hubei and Guizhou and the Chongqing-controlled part of Henan, the period between the summer of 1943 and the autumn of 1944 was one of fearful famine. In two consecutive years (1943 and 1944) a dry summer was followed

* These enterprises were all virtually owned by the "four families".

** The construction of munitions factories, roads, airfields and other projects was carried out by US companies and representatives of the "four families" who had considerable stocks in these companies. This



China War Theatre in 1944

by torrential rains which caused the flooding of vast cultivated areas under wheat, rice, kaoliang, and vegetables. Out of the nearly 211.5 million people who lived in this Guomindang-controlled territory about 80 million were affected by the drought and floods.²⁴ Indeed, by the end of 1943, more than 30 million, mostly women, old people and children, were roughly estimated to have died of hunger and diseases.²⁵ Masses of people left the famine-affected areas; roads and railway stations were packed with starving people and corpses. The threat of epidemics was so serious that on September 27, 1943, the Chongqing authorities circulated a directive to all governors of famine-affected provinces to "stop the population from leaving their homes, to wait for assistance and take all possible measures to combat the famine".²⁶ This directive shows that the Chongqing authorities had little or no idea of the real state of affairs. US journalists Theodore White and Annalee Jacoby, who visited famine-stricken Henan, wrote: "There were corpses on the road. A girl no more than seventeen, slim and pretty, lay on the damp earth, her lips blue with death; her eyes were open, and the rain fell on them. People chipped at bark, pounded it by the roadside for food; vendors sold leaves at a dollar a bundle. A dog digging at a mound was exposing a human body. Ghostlike men were skimming the stagnant pools to eat the green slime of the waters".²⁷

Could this tragedy be ended by the issue of directives "to stop the exodus of the population?"

Theodore White and Annalee Jacoby added the following observation:

"There are only two ways to deal with famine, both ... requiring major decision and swift execution. One is to move grain into the stricken areas in bulk and as swiftly as possible; the other is to move people out of the stricken areas in bulk and as swiftly as possible".²⁸

The Chongqing government sent to the famine-stricken areas 200 million Chinese dollars in one-hundred dollar bills instead of the much needed grain. By March 1944, Henan had received 80 million Chinese dollars. The banks, which issued the money, deducted operating charges. Hundred-dollar bills were changed

business alliance enjoyed great advantages in recruiting labour and in obtaining local building material.

for a 17 per cent fee, so that even before the money was put into circulation the value of each such bill dropped from 100 to 83 Chinese dollars. Besides, the banks deducted tax arrears, thus leaving people only a small portion of the originally allocated sum.

Rich merchants, landowners, Guomindang officers and generals, and officials of the Guomindang administrative apparatus took advantage of the calamity to buy up land from peasants at low prices, paying for it with grain and other crops. The grain paid to peasants for their land was priced twice, even three, times as high as the market price. The army billeted in villages commandeered the last foodstuffs that the peasants had, to the account of taxes. The grain from this fund was distributed among staff officers, and whatever was left went to local traders who resold it on the black market. Poverty and famine, combined with corruption in the army and the government apparatus, sapped the strength of the Guomindang China, ruling out any chance of creating an adequate war economy and industry.

In 1944, for example, Chiang Kaishek's China, with its 211.5 million population, produced 1,152 telephones, 150 tons of electrical wire, 802 low-power electric motors, 27 ships of 1,481 reg. gross tons, 270,969 barrels of cement, 81,026 cases of matches (one case containing 7,200 boxes).²⁹ According to official Guomindang statistics, coal deposits in Guizhou alone were estimated at 2,518 million tons, those in Hunan at 1,293 million, and in Sichuan at 3,833 million tons, whereas coal output in 1944 totalled a mere 5,502,000 tons. The archaic and primitive metal-smelting facilities yielded a mere 6,819 tons of pig iron and 5,827 tons of coarse steel. At the end of 1942, all branches of the manufacturing industry in Chiang Kaishek's China employed a little over 240,000 workers.³⁰ No wonder that this low industrial output made the Chongqing government entirely dependent on outside assistance. This fact did not escape the attention of US experts when they studied Chiang Kaishek's requests for supplies under the lend-lease scheme for 1945 and to the account of loans and credits. The list of requested supplies included whisky, luxury cars, cement, various metal goods—and this in addition to aircraft, tanks, guns, small arms, mortars, ammunition, and other war materiel. Up to the end of January 1945, the United States was expected to deliver under lend-lease alone more than 351,000

tons of freight valued at 442.8 million dollars.³¹ Significantly, most of the arms and war equipment delivered by the United States was not used against the Japanese but put in storage outside Chongqing, Chengdu and other cities, with only a small amount supplied to newly-reformed divisions kept in reserve. It was obvious that arms were being accumulated for a future struggle against the Communists.

All this shows that in the context of the generally favourable strategic situation brought about by the Soviet victories over Nazi Germany in Europe and by the successes of the Anglo-American armed forces in the Pacific and in Southeast Asia, the Guomindang China was preparing for civil war, and not for massive operations against the Japanese invaders.

The Situation in Guerilla Areas

The economic difficulties created by the "many-echelon-ed" blockade of the Shenganning liberated area and other guerilla areas in North China prompted leaders of the CPC to proclaim the slogan of "self-sufficiency", which meant utilisation of all available local food resources and of the potentialities of cottage industries to meet the needs of the people and the armed forces in these areas, and rally the able-bodied population for labour. A particularly great role here was assigned to the army and the guerilla detachments and columns in providing food, clothing, footwear, medicines and first-aid supplies not only to themselves but, to a certain extent, also to the population.

The CPC leaders attached extremely great importance to creating conditions in which the population of guerilla areas would, unlike people in Guomindang-controlled regions, not be exposed to death from hunger and disease, and would bear the hardships with fortitude.

This, however, was not easy to achieve, considering the enemy's subversive activities. Large numbers of trained agents of both the Japanese and the Guomindang intelligence services infiltrated the guerilla areas in order to weaken the fighting ability of the anti-Japanese troops, to bribe and demoralise local democratic government officials. In 1943, the Japanese and Guomindang commands even mounted several modest military operations

in order to leave behind the fighting lines groups of saboteurs and subversion agents posing as POWs or defectors.

It was particularly important in this situation to organise economic life properly, to reveal and muster all possible sources of food, to put to work all available industrial facilities, to fairly distribute manufactured products and commodities and meet the basic needs of the army and population. Combatting profiteers and shirkers was the principal task of the local democratic government bodies and the anti-Japanese public and political organisations.

Some economic progress was made in the Shenganning area, where the management was directly in the hands of the government, the Central Committee of the CPC, and the Command of the 8th Route Army. But the headway achieved in other guerilla areas of North China was negligible.

Speaking at the 4th session of the government of the Shenganning guerilla region on January 6, 1944, the Chairman of the Government, Lin Boqu described the economic situation in the following terms. In 1940, total cultivated area in the region was 11.7 million *mu* (1 *mu* = 6.6 acres), whereas in 1943, it was 13.8 million *mu*.³² In 1943, this farming area yielded 1,840,000 *dan* (1 *dan* = 60.5 kg) of cereals,³³ or 160,000 *dan* more than in the previous year. The production of industrial crops had also increased. In 1940, cotton fields occupied an area of 15,177 *mu*, whereas in 1943 their area expanded to 150,287 *mu*.³⁴

It was planned to bring the total cultivated area up to 15 million *mu* by 1945, with cotton plantations expanding to 350,000 *mu*.³⁵

The 8th Route Army took an active part in the economic development of the Shenganning region. In 1944, its soldiers and officers cultivated 830,000 *mu* of land and harvested more than 90,000 *dan* of field crops.³⁶

An American correspondent published an article in *Xinhua ribao* in which he gave his impressions of the 359th Brigade of the 8th Route Army which he had visited on his tour of Shenxi, Gansu and Ningxia. "The brigade works 25,000 *mu* of land and obtains twice as much produce and raw material as it actually needs. After that it either turns the surplus over to the government or sells it at the market, with some of the proceeds going

to the soldiers in payment for their work. . . This experience of the armed forces is shared with the population. The land is cultivated by work-teams of 10-15 men. Similar mutual assistance teams have been formed throughout the whole of the border region where they have opened up and are now cultivating one million *mu* of what was once virgin or fallow land. Working in the mutual assistance teams side by side with soldiers are 150,000 peasants."³⁷ However, units of the 8th Route Army which had worked hard to make it self-sufficient in food did it largely at the expense of their military training. The above-mentioned 359th Brigade did not take part in military exercises throughout the summer of 1943, so that when it engaged the enemy in the battlefield it sustained considerable losses.³⁸

Cottage industries were developing alongside small and medium-sized factories in the chemical, textile and metalworking industries. By 1944, the average annual output of the textile industry, with its more than 10,000 workers, had climbed to upwards of 150,000 bolts of cotton cloth. And more than 150,000 women were engaged in weaving at home.³⁹

The first producer cooperatives appeared here in 1942, and by 1944 their number had increased to nearly 150, with a total membership of 140,727 people. Over this period, cooperative shares rose in value from 55,525 to 767,400 Chinese dollars, with cooperative public funds rising from 3,500 to 170,000 Chinese dollars. Producer cooperatives had more than 50 enterprises, including 27 weaving mills, five creameries, five dye factories, and one clayware factory.⁴⁰ Among the shareholders (who, incidentally, were placed at the head of the production process, and were also used as technical advisers) were former owners of the respective enterprises who had fled here from the Japanese occupation. The authorities trusted them and encouraged their activities.

The public sector of the area included state-owned enterprises, enterprises operated by military units, and enterprises run by educational establishments. State-owned enterprises included 13 coal mines employing 432 miners, factories for the production of soap, medicines and kerosene. Military units operated 63 enterprises with a total of 3,999 workers. Here, too, wide use was made of the services of former factory owners or of shareholders of industrial enterprises in occupied territory, many of

whom were appointed industrial managers. The factories run by military units produced woollen yarn, sawn timber, harness, and starch. They also had their own dress-making shops and engaged in stock-breeding and bee-keeping, etc.

There were about 20,000 small trade outlets in the Shenganning area, including 138 cooperative ones. In Yan'an alone trading was done through 320 private and 20 cooperative trade outlets. Until the summer of 1943, consumer goods for the local population were purchased clandestinely in Japanese-occupied towns and districts. Goods manufactured in the guerilla regions were smuggled out in the same way and sold through the same channels. Between 1942 and June 1943, the Shenganning region thus marketed table salt (worth 22 million Chinese dollars), legumes and cereals (50,000 Chinese dollars), cotton fabrics (200,000), coal (300,000), felting and burlap (100,000), soap (100,000), homespun woollen blankets (100,000), livestock and livestock products (200,000), and other commodities (250,000).

All these goods were produced by the local population and sold in enemy-occupied areas in order to buy goods needed by the army and civilians.

At the same time, the Shenganning region imported cotton fabrics and yarn worth 23.5 million Chinese dollars, cotton and wool (18 million), paper and other stationery (4 million), farming implements (4 million), metalware (2 million), medicines (1 million), carpenter's tools (200,000), matches (200,000), dyes (400,000), legumes and cereals (500,000), and other commodities (1,420,000).⁴¹

In 1943, the budget of the government of the Shenganning region was 510 million Chinese dollars on the revenue side, while budgetary expenditure added up to 683.9 million Chinese dollars. Taxes and the incomes of state-run enterprises constituted 31.4 per cent of the revenue in the 1943 budget.⁴²

The authorities planned to eliminate the budget deficit in 1944 by raising the incomes of state-run enterprises. For example, profits made by the government from the sale of common and table salt in 1943 amounted to 31.4 million Chinese dollars, whereas the 1944 profits were to be 50 million Chinese dollars; income taxes from private enterprises, which amounted to 20 million Chinese dollars in 1942, were to be raised to 32 million in 1944.⁴³

Much of the educational and cultural work was devoted to the elimination of illiteracy among the adult population and the setting up of primary schools for children and adolescents. For this purpose, the command of the People's Liberation Army and the Party organisations in local democratic government bodies assigned office employees, former college students, army officers and literate soldiers to teach at schools and to conduct special literacy classes for adults.

Special books were written and published for schools and for literacy classes. They fostered patriotism among the learners, and loyalty to the United National Anti-Japanese Front.

The Japanese Warprisoners League set up by Sanzo Nosaka was very active in the Shenganning region.* In March 1942, it was renamed the Japanese Warprisoners' Antiwar League, and early in 1944 was reorganised into the Japanese People's Liberation League.⁴⁴ That was the first ever military and patriotic organisation in the history of the Japanese army, which set itself the task of liberating the Japanese people from imperialism with the help and support of the Chinese Communist Party.

The Japanese People's Liberation League with its 234 members had groups in almost all the guerilla regions of China: in

* Beginning in 1941, Sanzo Nosaka published in Yan'an military and political reviews and political pamphlets exposing the Japanese military and big business. Nosaka called on the Japanese soldiers fighting in China to come out against the war. In October 1941, Sanzo Nosaka published a brochure, *Saikin nihon-no seiji josei* (The Current Political Situation in Japan), in which he showed the predatory nature of the war waged by the Japanese imperialists in China, the baneful consequences of the "southern offensive" strategy and the decision to start a war in the Pacific. From that time on, every year Sanzo Nosaka issued antiwar pamphlets which he timed to coincide with two fateful anniversaries: July 7 and December 8. They were circulated among Japanese soldiers and officers in the major garrisons of North and Central China. Judging from secret Order No. 62, issued by the commander of the Japanese military police regiment in Taiyuan in 1943, "On the Punishment of Lance-Corporal Shizuo Kitakami for Reading a Criminal Communist Pamphlet", the pamphlet *The Current Political Situation in Japan* did reach soldiers and officers of the Japanese army in North China.

Sanzo Nosaka's pamphlets were also translated into Chinese and published by the political department of the 8th Route Army for circulation outside the Shenganning region.

Yan'an its organisation had 75 members, in North Shanxi—7, in the guerilla region of Shanxi-Suiyuan—36, in the Shandong guerilla region—37, in Southwest Shanxi—13, and in the zone of the New 4th Army in Central China—66.⁴⁵ The work done by the League had a positive effect on the minds of Chinese in the guerilla areas, who saw that some Japanese soldiers too, were sympathetic towards China and tried to help the Chinese to the best of their ability.

Nevertheless, the situation in the Shenganning region remained highly difficult. The population was growing because of the influx of refugees from famine-stricken areas. In 1943, and in the first half of 1944, Guomindang and puppet troops made frequent incursions into the region, causing economic damage.

In other guerilla areas the people and the troops, with the threat of invasion constantly hanging over them, expanded cultivated land areas and increased farm production in the course of 1943-1944.

In the northwestern part of Shanxi, for instance, the troops put 198,000 *mu* of virgin land to the plough in 1944. The building of new irrigation canals and the reconstruction of old ones, which brought water to more than 2 million *mu* of farm land, enabled peasants and troops in this part of Shanxi to take in a bumper harvest of 2,541,000 *dan* of different crops. Also that year, three irrigation canals—totalling some 68 *li* (34 km) in length, were built in the Taihan mountains, bringing water to 9,800 *mu* of ploughland.⁴⁶

American observers who visited the guerilla areas noted that the local Communist organisations strove to ensure control over all aspects of military and economic life, and that the Communists were doing their utmost to avoid differentiation of the population, any exacerbation of relations with landowners and rich peasants. They merely advised them to sell their "surplus" land and to reduce the rent. The Communists also put up with the fact that the land thus sold fell primarily into the hands of rich and middle peasants, and that cultural institutions were often headed by those who were far removed from Communist ideas or who, in fact, rejected them.

In an effort to prevent a possible resurgence of usury capital and financial dependence of poor lease-holders on usurers the democratic government bodies in the guerilla regions issued

loans to them to buy seed and open up lands. Credits were issued not only in local banknotes (*yuan*) but also in seeds in amounts fixed by local government bodies. In 1944, loans were advanced as follows:⁴⁷

Guerilla region	Cash loans (mln. yuan)	Seed loans (in dan)
Shanxi-Hebei-Chahaer	22	16,900
Hebei-Henan-Shandong	10	—
Shanxi-Suiyuan	6	—
Northwest Shanxi	50	—
Central Shandong	4	—
South Shandong	1.5	—
Central Jiangsu	10	54,000
North Jiangsu	10	—
Jiangxi-Anhui	15	—
Central Anhui	20	—
Binhai	1.4	3,000

This shows that although cash loans issued in some regions were small, and that although no stock of seed had been laid in most guerilla regions, peasants who wanted to develop virgin lands were given a measure of support by the local democratic government.

It follows from the above that the Communist Party of China devoted a great deal of attention to the principles of economic management in the context of guerilla warfare, and that it was looking for forms of management and control that would assure it a leading role in guerilla regions.

Chapter 6

Japan's Military and Political Situation in 1944

The year 1944 brought anxious times to Japan. In January, Japanese secret agents in Italy reported that at the Teheran Conference of the antifascist coalition the Soviet Union had not declined "Roosevelt's and Churchill's invitation to enter the war against Japan, although the concrete time of the action had not been specified". After Germany's surrender, the Soviet Union was going to "stem Japan's influence in the Far East and seize a number of territories securing for itself an outlet to the Pacific and closer contacts with China".¹

Japan's Military Operations in China in 1944

However, Tokyo hoped that with the Soviet Army successfully advancing westwards and thus attaining its strategic war aims against Germany without US and British help, its allies, in particular the United States, would have to give priority to their operations in the European Theatre. Japan would then be able to take advantage of the situation and, first, ensure a stable defence of positions held in early 1944 and, second, put greater pressure to bear on Chiang Kaishek, who would find himself in difficulties once US attention was diverted from the China Theatre. It was also hoped that Soviet military successes in Europe would lead to a cooling of relations between the allies—the United States and Britain, on the one hand, and the Soviet Union, on the other. This would pave the way to separate peace negotiations between Japan and the United States, with the task of barring the way to communism in Asia providing a basis for such talks.

Such was the political context in which the Japanese command was preparing for new offensive operations in the China Theatre. Above all, it sought to seize the railways leading from Manchuria to the frontiers of Indochina and Burma. To achieve this, it was decided to launch an offensive in the central part of Henan Province to capture the Zhengzhou-Hankou railway. The Japanese command intended to commit considerable forces against the Guomindang army, and leave only covering detachments against the guerilla areas in the hope that the Nanking and Chongqing troops would continue to blockade them.

The Japanese command expected that the communist troops would try to expand the areas under their control as soon as they learned about the offensive in Central and South China. These efforts of the people's liberation forces could be referred to as evidence of the growing communist threat in China and, consequently, as an argument for uniting the forces of Chongqing, Washington and Tokyo in the struggle against the communist danger.

At the same time, since Tokyo did not have complete faith in Nanking and Chongqing troops, it did not withdraw all Japanese garrisons from North China. A people's liberation army breakthrough could lead to Japan's losing North China. And that could mean isolation of Manchuria from the rest of China. For this reason, only some of the units stationed in this region (the 41st, 62nd and 63rd infantry divisions) were concentrated on the bank of the Huanghe in the Kaifeng-Yuanpu-Zhengzhou area. This grouping was to be the first to launch the offensive.

Planning the offensive operations for the spring and summer of 1944, the Japanese command set itself several aims: first, to demonstrate the fighting efficiency of Japan's land army and its preparedness to cope with major operational missions in the China Theatre; second, to seize and destroy airfields and aircraft of the US 14th Air Army based in Central and Southwest China; third, to take advantage of the favourable conditions thus created for mounting an offensive by the Japanese grouping located in South China in the northern and northwestern directions in order to link up with the main forces advancing from the north along the Hankou-Canton railway, to disrupt connections between the Burma Theatre and the Guomindang front in Southwest China, and cut overland communications be-

tween Burma and China and thus halt arms and food supplies to China.

This would put the Chongqing government and command in a desperate position, and Japan could hope to secure for itself favourable terms for a deal with the Guomindang.

The operation was planned in two stages. In the first stage, the two Japanese groupings in Henan Province were to advance towards each other from the north (the Kaifeng-Yuanpu-Zhengzhou area) and from the south (the Xinyang area) along the Peking-Hankou railway with the aim of capturing it. In the second and main stage of the operation, the two groupings located in the central part of Hunan Province were to advance towards each other from the north (the Wuhan and Lake Poyang area) and from the south (from north of Canton) along the Hankou-Canton railway.

The first stage of the operation in the central part of Henan Province was to be carried out between mid-April and mid-June 1944.²

Apart from the 41st, 62nd and 63rd infantry divisions, the northern group operating in the Kaifeng-Yuanpu-Zhengzhou area included the 37th and 65th infantry divisions and the 3rd Tank Division.³ The southern group, which was concentrated in the vicinity of Xinyang station of the Peking-Hankou railway, included troops of the 3rd and 58th infantry divisions, the 4th cavalry and the 15th mixed brigade of the Hankou Army Group.

Before launching the first stage of the operation, the Japanese command formed a special body of troops consisting of two infantry regiments, a tank regiment, a field engineer battalion and two field artillery battalions which, supported by 30 aircraft, mounted a raid westward on April 18, attacking the positions of the 65th and 66th infantry divisions of the Guomindang 15th Army Group which were defending Luoyang, the main town of Henan Province. The Japanese 35th Division, exploiting its success on the southern bank of the Huanghe, forced the river at Yuanqu and attacked the Chinese units of the 14th Army Group in the Minchi area in stride and then captured the town of Lingbao, finding itself far west of Luoyang.⁴

The Chinese troops withdrew in confusion west and southwest. Thus, the Japanese covered the right flank of the force

advancing along the Peking-Hankou railway. On May 1, 1944, a Japanese force started moving northward from the Xinyang area. The northern force, whose main body consisted of the 3rd Tank Division, was advancing to meet it halfway. Encountering only weak resistance from units of the Chinese 36th Army Group, on May 9 this force approached the town of Suining, while the southern force approached Zhumadian on May 13. As this was the area where the Guomintang's 36th Army Group had retreated to, taking up defensive positions, the Japanese troops effected a turning manoeuvre in an attempt to encircle the Chinese troops. The fighting lasted for a month (until June 15), with both sides suffering heavy losses. Had the Guomintang high command supported the 36th Army Group or at least provided it with anti-tank and air defence means, the fighting could have lasted even longer and, undoubtedly, altered the Japanese plans for the second stage of the operation in the central part of Hunan Province. However, the 36th Army Group did not get any support and thus found itself in desperate straits. The commander of the group, General Li Jiayou, was killed in combat.⁵

When the Japanese command was assured of a favourable outcome of the battle at Suiping and Zhumadian, it passed over to the next stage of the operation. On May 25, 1944, the body of troops consisting of the 13th, 68th, 116th and 40th divisions (numbering nearly 200,000 officers and men), concentrated in the Wuhan area and along the eastern bank of Lake Poyang, was ordered to assume the offensive southward, advancing along the Hankou-Canton railway. At the same time, the southern force, consisting of the 38th and the 104th infantry divisions, the 126th Separate Brigade of the 23rd Army and reinforcement units (altogether nearly 80,000 officers and men), assumed the offensive from north of Canton.⁶ Part of this force was advancing northward along the Hankou-Canton railway, while another, more powerful part was advancing in the northwestern direction with the object of reaching Guilin and meeting there with the main force advancing from the Wuhan area.

The Chinese high command, informed about the enemy's strength and intentions, opted for resisting the Japanese offensive. The Guomintang command, seeking to keep its forces as near to the US airfields and planes as possible, concentrated all its

forces around the major towns and railway stations situated along the Hankou-Canton railway—Changsha, Hengyang, Yongxing, Changzhou, and Shaozhou. Thousands of people were marshalled to build fortification belts around these towns. The US Air Force command demanded that the zones of, and approaches to, airfields where US aircraft were based, should be particularly reinforced.

When the Japanese assumed the offensive at the end of May 1944, the construction of fortifications was still underway. Despite counteraction by US fighter planes, Japanese aircraft heavily bombed the lines of defence. Damaged by the bombing were the towns of Changsha, Hengyang, Zhuzhou, Lingling, and some others in whose vicinity US airfields were located.

When the Japanese offensive began, the Guomintang armies were concentrated as follows: the 44th, 72nd and 4th armies, at Changsha; the New 2nd Army in the Yichong-Pingxiang area and the Yuanjian coal mines; the 37th Army Group, in the Yunxing-Changzhou area. The Shaozhou area was protected by the main force of the 7th Military Area, and the Hengyang area by the 10th Army. Informed of the enemy's intention to reach Guilin, the Chinese high command laid special emphasis on fortifying both the town and the approaches to it. Concentrated there were the troops of the 31st, the 10th Yunnan and the 15th Sichuan army groups and a detachment of the US AF ground support unit from the Nanning area. The town was also furnished additional air defence.⁷

Taking advantage of the fact that the defenders' attention was focussed on major towns and villages, the reinforced Japanese advance detachments bypassed the centres of resistance wherever the terrain permitted, cut deep into their rear and approached the communication lines. That was how they bypassed Changsha. While the battle was fought at the approaches to the town for the railway junction and the US airfield east of the town, two reinforced Japanese columns formed in advance bypassed the town and seized Xiangseng, a county seat southwest of Changsha, the county seat of Pingxiang and the Yuanjian coal mines southeast of Changsha. A month after the beginning of the second stage of the operation, on June 25, the main force of the Japanese northern group approached the railway junction and town of Hengyang, bypassed the 10th Army and sent two

reinforced advance detachments—one in the direction of Lingling, and the other in the direction of Yongxing-Changzhou, where US airfields had been built.

Still more successful was the offensive mounted by the southern group of Japanese troops. As the Chinese command believed that the main strike would be dealt in the northern direction, it covered the approaches to the town of Shaozhou situated near the Hankou-Canton railway with a dense network of defensive positions.⁸ However, the Japanese main force assumed the offensive in the western and northwestern directions, captured Gaoyao without suffering losses, and then destroyed US airfields in Deqing and Wuzhou and seized the tungsten mines in Luoding. On September 8, 1944, both groups were at an equal distance from Guilin—the northern seizing Xinyang, and the southern approaching the town of Liuzhou, a major junction.⁹

The Japanese command expected Chinese resistance to grow, especially at the approaches to Guilin. General Hata, commander of the Japanese troops in China, flew to Hengyang while his chief of staff General Yamamoto went to Wuzhou. This was clear evidence of the anxiety felt by the Japanese staff.

The sentiment prevailing among the Japanese command could be accounted for by what were for them extremely worrisome reports from the European theatres: while the Western allies had landed in France and mounted a successful offensive, the Soviet armies had completely cleared Soviet territory of invaders and entered Germany. As regards China itself, however, Japanese apprehensions concerning an invigoration of action by the people's liberation armies did not come true. The armies displayed no special activity, confining themselves to defending the boundaries of the liberated areas. Guerilla raids aimed at seizing small towns located close to railways or highways were easily rebuffed by Japanese garrisons.

In Chongqing the atmosphere was no less alarming. The US advisers and General Chennault's staff began to fear that the Japanese offensive operations might result in the destruction of all US airfields and other facilities in Central and Southwest China. They were also concerned about Japanese troop activities in Northern Burma. In case of success, these troops might cut off the US bases in China. General Stilwell urged ever more persistently that the Guomindang and the communist armed

forces join efforts in the war against Japan. This led to an open conflict between the chief US adviser and Chiang Kaishek, who demanded that General Stilwell be recalled.¹⁰ The situation grew ever more strained. After five days of regrouping and bringing up reserves, the Japanese forces were poised for a decisive battle for Guilin which was now only 40 kilometres away. This was when Washington issued an order recalling Joseph Stilwell and appointing General Albert Wedemeyer as Chiang Kaishek's chief adviser. Chiang Kaishek took advantage of Washington's decision to lay the blame for the failure of the summer-autumn 1944 campaign on Stilwell and the Communists (though the erroneous defensive strategy in the 1944 campaign had been adopted by Chiang Kaishek's staff in defiance of Stilwell's protests).^{*}

When it became known that Stilwell had been replaced by Wedemeyer, the Japanese command of the northern body of troops sent 21 reconnaissance aircraft at dawn on October 19 to scout out the situation in the Guilin and Liuzhou areas. It decided to take advantage of the change of advisers to launch an offensive immediately. What the pilots reported was quite unexpected. "Along the roads stretching from Guilin to Liuzhou and further towards Ninyuan and Nanning columns of soldiers are moving, a living stream of people and animals is moving on, while on both sides of the roads villages are burning. Aircraft are circling above the columns. After a few turns they disappear in a southwesterly direction. The towns of Guilin and Liuzhou are burning and the airfields in their vicinity are screened by thick smoke."¹¹

It was clear that people had been evacuated from Guilin and Liuzhou and the way for the Japanese army was open. The Japanese command ordered the troops to advance in forced marches towards the southern group which was near the town of Liuzhou.

Having successfully completed the operation in the central part of Hunan and Guangxi provinces, the Japanese command gained control over the line stretching from Manchuria to Burma and Indochina.

^{*} When the Japanese were mounting their offensive in Central Hunan, a 500,000-strong Chinese army was blockading and raiding guerilla-controlled areas. More, almost all Sichuan, Guizhou and a considerable part of the Hubei and Hunan armies remained inactive on the borders of and in the territory of Sichuan, poised to launch a civil war.

Japanese troops continued their advance in Guizhou Province and further towards Sichuan although no directives to that effect had come from the High Command. Later, Japanese war historians described this period as the "directiveless period of the China war". Meanwhile, Tokyo had been feverishly preparing for "a decisive battle at home". In December 1944, the High Command recognised that the struggle in the Philippines was futile and demanded that the army and nation engage in full-scale preparations for a "prolonged war" involving a system of active defences based in Japan, Manchuria and China.¹²

At a meeting on January 25, 1945, the High Command Council decided to consolidate the political and military leadership, and to unite Japan, Manchuria and China in an effort to ensure the production of arms (above all, aircraft), liquid fuel, ships, rolling stock and foodstuffs, and to provide for air defences, efficient transport and the necessary manpower.¹³

All this showed that Japan meant to drag out the war in the hope of benefiting from a controversy among members of the antifascist coalition and make peace with America on the condition that it should launch war against the USSR and the Communist Party of China so as to prevent the people's liberation forces from winning in China and the rest of Asia.*

Japan Seeks a Way Out of the War

In the summer of 1944, as Japan's military and economic position deteriorated, the ruling circles were feverishly seeking a way out. The first thing they did was to replace the more odious statesmen, military and political leaders.

On July 22, 1944, extras were issued by the Japanese morn-

* Of late, more has become known about Japan's wartime plans of developing atomic weapons and the super-secret Project Ni. In 1944, Premier Tojo insisted on speeding up the effort to produce the bomb in the hope that it would change the course of the war.

Although in July 1945 Japanese scientists let the top brass know that it was beyond Japan's capacity to create atomic weapons, they were urged to go on with the project. In August 1945, after US A-bombs had been dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, a spokesman of Naval Headquarters demanded that the research be continued so that the bomb should be ready "if not for this war, then for the next one!"

ing papers to announce the resignation of Premier Tojo, "the country's most warlike person, and an anti-American" who opposed peace talks with China. It was also announced that a new government had been formed. For the first time in Japan's history, the government was to be headed simultaneously by two military men endowed with equal rights—General Kuniaki Koiso and Admiral Mitsumasa Yonai. After a long and serious debate the Jushins (elders and imperial advisers), among them Konoye, Hiranuma, Prince Kido, Okada and Wakatsuki, approved of the choice. The new leaders were known as "moderates" and were therefore the most suitable figures to be entrusted with initiating a new round of peace talks with Chiang Kaishek and launching peace talks with the United States.*

The new Japanese cabinet set itself the aim of finding an honorable way out of the war through peace talks with the United States, urging a settlement in China and preserving the empire, albeit within narrower borders. The Koiso government included other "moderate" statesmen. Special hopes were pinned on Mamoru Shigemitsu, Foreign Minister and Minister for Greater East Asia Affairs. He occupied a special place on the Koiso team, for it was with his name that the cautious and "sensible" policy vis-à-vis the Soviet Union was associated. He was regarded as a student of Soviet foreign policy. Shigemitsu was aware that the Soviet victories over Nazi Germany had immeasurably heightened the prestige of the USSR on the international scene (in 1944 he already had no doubts about this) and was thinking of inviting the Soviet Union to act as mediator in peace talks between Japan and China.

The day after the new cabinet had been formed, Koiso invit-

After the surrender, Japan did its best to conceal Project Ni both from the Japanese and the foreign public (*Pravda*, January 12 and 14, 1985).

* Great changes were also made in the Army and Navy Command. For instance, on August 2, 1944, Admiral Kantaro Suzuki was appointed Chairman of the Privy Council, while Admiral Koshiro Shinawa took the post of Naval Chief of Staff. They were close to Koiso and supported his programme of peace talks with Chiang Kaishek and the United States. On September 1, 1944, General Naosaburo Okabe was appointed commander of the expeditionary army in North China. On November 22, 1944, General Okamura was appointed commander-in-chief of the whole expeditionary army in China.

ed Harushiga Ninomiya, Minister of Education who had worked in China for a long time and knew many ministers in Chiang Kaishek's government, to formulate the terms for peace talks with China. On August 19, 1944, the High Command Council specially discussed ways of ending the "China Incident" and concluded that the situation called for urgent political steps to solve the Chinese problem.

Statesmen opposed to the Koiso-Yonai government, among them some Jushins, did not think it wise to invite the Soviet Union to mediate in peace talks with Chiang Kaishek. They held that the Soviet Union, bound by a treaty of alliance with the United States, would not agree to the role of mediator. There was no clarity about Japanese-US relations either; Japan had to be cautious lest it miss the last chance for launching separate Japanese-US talks.

Some of the Japanese statesmen were of the opinion that the Nanking "government" should not be ignored during the talks with Chongqing. On August 30, the High Command Council requested the Premier and the Foreign Minister to "come into contact with the Chinese national government in Nanking in order to find out its stand and its possible steps in connection with talks on ways to end the 'China Incident' about to be initiated with the Chongqing Guomintang".¹⁴

On September 5, the Council met again to hear the War Minister and Foreign Minister report on military and diplomatic ways of solving the Chinese issue. Both ministers were of the opinion that the first thing to be done was to urge the unification of the Nanking and Chongqing governments by supporting their anticommunist measures within the country. Furthermore, the War Minister declared that from the military point of view a platform for joint talks by Tokyo, Nanking and Chongqing could be provided by the withdrawal of US and British troops and advisers from China, by dismantling all US and British bases and airfields in China and by Chongqing's consent to preserve the status quo in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia.¹⁵

Foreign Minister Shigemitsu suggested a number of political measures vis-à-vis Chongqing with the object of ending the war for a "Greater East Asia". According to him, the Chongqing regime should be prevailed upon to cease resistance and thus make it possible to set up a special body to conduct direct peace

talks. When such a body, consisting of authoritative figures of the Guomintang government, had been formed, a delegation of the Nanking regime was to come to Chongqing. The Nanking and Chongqing representatives would discuss China's relations with the United States and Britain after peace had been fully established in East Asia, as well as the implementation by the United States and Britain of the demand to withdraw their troops and advisers and to dismantle their bases and airfields in Chinese territory. As for the relationship between Nanking and Chongqing, the problem was to be settled in the following way: Chiang Kaishek would return to Nanking and form a joint Chinese national government; internal political and administrative issues would be discussed and agreed upon by a Nanking and a Chongqing delegations.

A Japanese government delegation, the last to arrive in Chongqing, would take part in tripartite talks on Sino-Japanese relations.

Shigemitsu proposed the following terms of a peace settlement between Japan and China. The Japanese side was to guarantee the withdrawal of its troops from China after the US and British troops and advisers had been evacuated. Representatives of the military command were to agree upon the procedure of withdrawing the Japanese troops. The Manchukuo status would not be changed. As for Inner Mongolia, although administratively it would remain subordinate to China, Japanese interests were to be heeded. Hong Kong could be administratively subordinated to China, while the status of other southern territories was to be discussed separately. Shigemitsu suggested working out and offering serious and stable guarantees of China's independence and integrity, provided the Chinese government, too, granted equally reliable guarantees to Japan. Among other things, it was to pledge that "in case of a US or British invasion of China, the government would rebuff the aggressor, using the requisite number of troops and would accept the Empire's proposal of military aid".¹⁶ The Council accepted the ministers' proposals and agreed to invite the Soviet Union to mediate in the peace talks. Should the Soviet Union refuse the invitation (it must be said for the Japanese statesmen that they had no illusions about the Soviet Union's possible participation in Sino-Japanese peace talks as mediator), Japan would seek its neutrality

by offering guarantees that the Communist Party of China would be invited to take part in the discussion of China's internal political and administrative set-up.

Attempts to take advantage of the Soviet Union's influence in China were to be combined with efforts to prevent the Soviet Union, the United States and Britain from consulting each other on the Chinese issue by all available means, especially by making them suspect one another of harbouring secret plans in China.

Meanwhile, the Japanese authorities took steps to establish direct contact with Chongqing. Already in late August Yasujiro Shibayama, the War Minister's plenipotentiary, arrived in Nanking and set up a special information centre to be used for informal talks with members of the Nanking government, in particular with Chen Gunbo, Minister for Propaganda and Wang Jingwei's future successor,* and Zhou Fuohai, member of the Executive Yuan, and their associates. Shibayama was granted broad powers by the Koiso government and his direct superior, the War Minister. He spent considerable sums on recruiting agents ("angels of peace") from among high-ranking Chinese officials and prominent journalists who were to advocate the ideas of Sino-Japanese peace and maintain contacts with certain circles in Chongqing in order to set the stage for peace talks.

In mid-September 1944, Zhou Fuohai sent Guo Minzhou, his trusted assistant, to Chongqing to meet Chiang Kaishek. On October 18, Guo Minzhou returned from Chongqing with no results. He said that Chiang Kaishek, closely surrounded by a crowd of Americans, was receiving one American delegation after another, and there was no way of approaching him.¹⁷ Guo Minzhou thought that there was no other way but to resort to the mediation of a neutral state. His opinion was ignored, and a group, headed by Komon Yazaki, an expert in political intrigue and in charge of the press in occupied China, was sent to Chongqing. However, US agents warned the US Ambassador that Yazaki's appearance in the city was fraught with troubles. From his old connections in Chongqing Komon Yazaki learned

* At this time Wang Jingwei was receiving medical treatment in Nagoya, Japan. He was never to return to his duties as statesman. He died on November 10, 1944.

that the Americans had been informed of his arrival. He was forced to depart hastily from Chongqing, leaving behind some more obscure members of his group, among them a radio operator who was to transmit all information on events in Chongqing to Nanking.

Tokyo organised a "pilgrimage" of various statesmen and politicians posing as "private individuals" to China to find out the Chinese view of the peace terms the Japanese were going to advance. The first "expedition" was headed by Issei Ugaki who had for several years been Japan's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to China. He was accompanied by Rihachiro Sakanishi, retired Major-General Wataru Watanabe, Taketora Ogata, Minister without Portfolio and head of the Information Department of the Koiso government, and Masaichi Mido-ro, one of the directors of the newspaper *Asahi*. This group of "peace-seekers" made a tour of Manchuria and North and Central China. They met hundreds of Chinese officials and intellectuals and, having obtained detailed information from Shibayama in Nanking, finally returned to Tokyo on October 21, 1944. While sharing his impressions with Premier Koiso, Shigemitsu and Sugiyama, Issei Ugaki made the following remark, "The Chinese don't seem to have any special objections to Manchuria being independent of Chiang Kaishek. However, it was impossible to find out official Chongqing's stand on the matter because it has a direct bearing on its relations with the USSR, and at present Chongqing is afraid of spoiling relations with the Soviet Union."¹⁸

All that happened at the end of 1944, when the Soviet Union was scoring one splendid victory after another and the Allied forces, having landed in France, were advancing to meet the Soviet Army. In this context, Chiang Kaishek, for all his hatred of communism and the Soviet Union, could not bring himself to enter into an alliance with Japan. However, the Japanese emissaries did not give up their efforts.

For instance, wide use was made of the special Centre for Studies of International Problems set up in Shanghai by Tadayoshi Miyagawa, Prince Konoye's stepbrother. The Centre was visited not only by diplomats and journalists, but also by traders, speculators in foreign currency, and stockbrokers, who often went to Chongqing on business.

The Miyagawa Saloon in Shanghai was also used for obtaining

information on plans of the postwar settlement, especially on matters related to Japan's and China's future in Asia and the possible controversy between the allies—the United States and the USSR—on these issues.

Late in November 1944, one of the Miyagawa Saloon's frequent visitors, Wang Fangsheng, a high-ranking official of Chiang Kaishek's government who had just come from Chongqing, told the host about his talk with a US Embassy official who had told him Chiang Kaishek was going to adhere to the Cairo resolutions in relation to Japan. This meant that, first, the preliminary talks on a peace settlement with Japan could be started only after Japan had withdrawn its troops from China and, second, that Japan was to cover the losses caused to China by its aggression and the war.¹⁹

This worried Tokyo. The Japanese government decided to give Chiang Kaishek fresh proof of its serious intentions concerning his person and to make it known to him that Japan was no longer going to reckon with the Nanking "government" and would deal with it as the Chongqing dictator pleased. This policy was urged by Konoye. He contended that Japan should no longer back up the unpopular Nanking "government" and should, instead, enter into bilateral talks with Chongqing. He insisted on discarding the illusion that it was possible to win the war in the Pacific, the more so as there was no hope of aid from Nazi Germany, which was now no more than "a living corpse".²⁰

It was decided to make the new proposals known to Chongqing through Professor Mao Bin, a member of the Wang Jingwei "government", who had influential connections in Chongqing government circles.* As early as August 14, 1944, Mao Bin re-

* After Japan's attack on China in 1937, Mao Bin, a prominent figure in the Guomindang, became a member of the puppet government of North China. Later he became Chairman of the Xinminhui, a fascist-minded nationalist organisation. In the Wang Jingwei government in Nanking he was head of the Juridical Yuan. Taking advantage of his connections with the Japanese, Mao Bin succeeded in securing the release of many traders and industrialists arrested for their anti-Japanese activities, and helped them move to Chongqing or Indochina. The Japanese took advantage of Mao Bin's "activities" when there was a need for getting in touch with Chongqing and preparing the terms of an armistice with Chiang Kaishek. The latter knew Mao Bin well and corresponded with him. (See *Taiheiyō senso shuketsu ron*, p. 406.)

ceived through Professor Kosaku Tamura a letter with instructions from Tokyo, in which he was requested to contact Chongqing. Thereupon he was summoned by Cheng Gunbo, who provided him with a mandate for direct talks with Chongqing on behalf of the Nanking "government". At the same time, the Japanese military authorities had an aircraft ready to take Mao Bin to Chongqing. On August 16 Chongqing's permission for the landing of this aircraft was requested by radio. The request was turned down, because Chongqing's air space was controlled by a joint US and Chinese command, and Chennault would not "guarantee the safety of either the flight or the landing".²¹ Nonetheless, Mao Bin launched vigorous activities in Shanghai. He sent letters to his friends in Chongqing and even came into official contact with the Guomindang Central Executive Committee in Chongqing as a representative of the Nanking Guomindang. Moreover, he established radio communications with certain agencies and organisations of the Chongqing government. A stream of information on political events in Chongqing flowed to his residence.

Early in December 1944, Masayuki Tani, Japan's chief adviser with the Nanking "government", and commander of the Nanking garrison Imai were summoned to Tokyo to report on the results of Mao Bin's mission. On the eve of his flight to Tokyo, Imai got a telegram from Shanghai informing him that Chiang Kaishek, under US pressure, had prohibited contacts with Mao Bin's Shanghai information centre and arrested some of his "correspondents".²² However, Premier Koiso thought that Mao Bin's possibilities had not yet been exhausted. He hoped that Mao Bin's personal contacts with the Guomindang's leaders in Chongqing might help in setting the stage for peace talks. Colonel Hiroo Yamagata, one of the Premier's aides, was sent to Shanghai to arrange for the clandestine transportation of Mao Bin to Chongqing. Mao Bin was to carefully study the terms which could be accepted for peace talks and to report the results to the Japanese government.²³

Assisted by his friends from the Chongqing Guomindang, Mao Bin succeeded in meeting prominent members of the Guomindang Central Executive Committee and Chiang Kaishek's assistants responsible for diplomatic and military affairs.

A sharp debate flared up in Tokyo around the "Mao Bin"

campaign. Some of the ministers (in particular, the War Minister and Foreign Minister) regarded the action as a mere adventure which might completely discredit the Japanese government. Nonetheless, Koiso continued to insist on the mediation of Mao Bin, a "popular Guomindang member".

Early in March 1945, Mao Bin returned, with the active assistance of Hiroo Yamagata, from Chongqing to Shanghai and later, on March 16, he came to Tokyo. The next day Premier Koiso convened a meeting at which Mao Bin informed the Japanese leaders in detail of Chongqing's attitude towards the Japanese peace proposals. He presented a "rather gloomy" picture.²⁴

On March 21, 1945, Koiso informed the High Command Council meeting of Chiang Kaishek's demands which, as he said, constituted "preliminary conditions for talks". They boiled down to the following: the Nanking regime was to be dissolved immediately; the Chongqing government was to be recognised as China's sole legitimate government; Japanese troops were to be withdrawn and the war damage caused to China was to be made good.²⁵ The information annoyed the members of the High Command Council. War Minister Sugiyama, Foreign Minister Shigemitsu and Naval Minister Admiral Yonai declared they had no faith in Mao Bin's information. Nonetheless, it was obvious that the attempts to conclude a separate peace with Chiang Kaishek had failed. And since the Koiso government regarded that its chief aim, it was forced to resign. Its place was taken by a new government headed by Admiral Suzuki (on April 6, 1945).

Japan's military and political position was steadily deteriorating. Early in April 1945, the US Army and Navy launched its Okinawa operation. Prior to the operation, such prominent figures as Konoye, Okada and Wakatsuki told the Emperor they were convinced defeat was inevitable and that it was therefore essential to take steps to "uphold" the pillars of Japan's state system. They stressed that it was imperative to strike a deal, as soon as possible, with the USA and Britain, using anticommunism as a platform. Konoye and his followers became especially active when on April 5, 1945, the Soviet Union denounced the Soviet-Japanese neutrality pact concluded in April 1941.

The Soviet measure was a warranted response to Japan's

hostile policy vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, to its systematic violation of the neutrality pact and its assistance to Germany in the war against the USSR. Throughout the war, the Japanese command kept the powerful Kwantung Army close to the Soviet border, thus creating a threat of aggression and compelling the Soviet command to divert considerable contingents of troops from the German front. Japan regularly supplied Nazi Germany with intelligence on the USSR. The Japanese Navy harassed Soviet shipping in the Pacific. During the war, Japanese naval vessels detained and examined some 200 and sank 18 Soviet ships.²⁶

Taking into account Japan's hostile policy, the Soviet Union was forced to denounce the Soviet-Japanese treaty of neutrality and later, on August 8, officially subscribed to the Potsdam declaration on Japan of the USA, Britain and China.

On May 8, 1945, the US flag was hoisted over Okinawa. At the same time Tokyo learned of the fall of Berlin and of Germany's surrender. On May 11-14, 1945, a meeting of the High Command Council decided to seek peace with Britain and the United States with Soviet mediation. Now, the Japanese government realised that it could not count on Soviet mediation after the latter denounced the neutrality treaty as a result of Japan breaching its provisions. Moreover, it was informed that at the Yalta Conference the Soviet Union had agreed to enter the war against Japan two or three months after the end of the war in Europe. Nonetheless, the Japanese government asked for the Soviet Union's mediation in the hope of dragging out the war and contributing to the worsening, even rupture, of relations between members of the antifascist coalition.

The Situation in the Guerilla Areas in Late 1944 and Early 1945. CPC Efforts to Set Up a Coalition Government

At the end of 1944 and the beginning of 1945, with members of the antifascist coalition about to win the final victory in World War II and Japan losing battle after battle in the Pacific the people's liberation forces in China succeeded in expanding

the guerilla bases, increasing the size of the regular troops and guerilla detachments, and raising a little the living standard in the liberated areas.

At this time, China's liberated areas comprised:

The Shanxi-Hebei-Chahaer area, 800,000 *li* (1 *li* = 0.5 sq km), population nearly 25 million. Administratively divided into 108 counties.²⁷

The Shanxi-Hebei-Shandong-Henan area, 294,000 *li* (59 counties), population nearly 7 million.²⁸

The Shandong liberated area, 600,000 *li* (82 counties), population nearly 2.9 million.²⁹

Since 1941, the guerilla areas and bases in Shandong were of two types: those completely cleared of Japanese and Guomindang troops, and those where apart from 8th Route Army units and guerilla detachments, there were Guomindang units. Shandong was an important strategic coastal beachhead, and the number of Japanese occupation troops there was constantly growing, while the number of Guomindang troops decreased.

Not until the middle of 1944 were some of the Japanese formations transferred from Shandong to the Pacific, so that the people's liberation forces were able to liberate more counties and prefectures.

The Shenxi-Suiyuan area, 331,000 *li*, population 3,200,000. Liberated areas in Central China totalled 1,200,000 *li* with a population of nearly 60 million.³⁰ They were controlled by units of the New 4th Army and guerilla detachments. The action zone of the New 4th covered the Shanghai-Nanking area, the Shanghai-Hangzhou railway, and the southern section of the Tianjin-Pukou railway.

Here the conditions for the people's liberation forces were especially difficult. When the three anticommunist campaigns had failed, the Guomindang went over to subversive activities against the New 4th and the guerilla bases, sending phoney guerilla groups there to commit acts of sabotage, assassinate troop and guerilla commanders, and sow panic and strife among the population. This subversive activity caused enormous damage to the economy. In 1943 alone, losses were estimated at nearly 121 million yuan.³¹ To neutralise the subversion, the commanders and political workers of the New 4th Army made consider-

able concessions to the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, seeking to at least regulate the size of the land rent.

In the early months of 1942, a guerilla brigade was formed in the valley of the Dongjiang in South China.* By 1943, its action zone extended over a vast territory including the towns of Huiyang, Dongguan, Boan, Haifeng, Lufeng, Bolo, Zengzheng, and Longmen. It operated in the vicinity of Hong Kong and Kowloon and the environs of Canton.

The brigade included a detachment made up of officers and men of the British Army freed by Chinese guerillas from Japanese POW camps.**

By 1944, the Dongjiang Brigade had 11 detachments (each equal to a battalion). It set up four guerilla bases, and local democratic bodies of government in four counties.³²

In December 1944, a Zhujiang guerilla brigade was formed southeast of Canton. Its zone of action included Zhongshan, Shunde, Fangyui, Nanhai, Sangshui, the environs of Canton and the Zhujiang River estuary.³³

In the autumn of 1944 the guerilla detachments on the island of Hainan were formed into the Qunyang separate guerilla brigade consisting of five detachments, each equal to a regiment, with a total strength of more than 5,000 men.³⁴ In its territory local democratic bodies of government were elected, and a military-administrative board of the Hainan area was set up in the northern part of the island.

In January 1945, patriotically-minded students and workers of Swatow, Chaozhou and other towns in eastern Guangdong formed several anti-Japanese guerilla detachments. They engaged the enemy in the Puning, Zeyang, Chaxiang, Denghai and other regions. The guerilla detachments numbered 2,000 men, and were formed into a brigade in due course.³⁵

In early 1945, the people's liberation forces and the militia grew considerably in size. They were located as follows³⁶:

* For this reason it was called the Dongjiang guerilla brigade.

** In August 1943, the British command, "giving in to Chiang Kai-shek", evacuated its officers and men, and the British guerilla detachment ceased to exist (DMA, reg. 5, case 101, file 2, sheets 18-19).

Area	"Regular" troops	Guerilla troops	Peasant militia
<i>North China</i>			
Shenganning	76,518	—	21,803
Shanxi-Hebei-Chahaer	50,482	53,512	501,287
Shanxi-Hebei-Henan	56,385	20,993	132,000
Shandong	106,358	100,000	384,421
Hebei-Henan-Shandong	40,926	57,214	101,368
Shanxi-Suiyuan	29,694	4,597	41,000
Hebei-Rehe	6,546	5,065	5,100
<i>Central China</i>			
Central Jiangsu	32,338	9,183	201,184
Southern bank of the Huanghe	38,280	8,275	73,032
Northern Jiangsu	32,290	23,615	136,300
Northern bank of the Huanghe	23,123	29,000	—
Hebei-Henan-Anhui	16,810	18,887	—
Jiangsu-Zhejiang	41,484	4,974	103,162
Anhui-Jiangsu	15,372	7,359	144,868
Eastern Zhejiang	—	6,403	26,284
Hubei-Henan-Jiangsu	—	4,571	—
<i>South China</i>			
Dongjiang Brigade	—	12,390	14,000
Hainan Brigade	—	8,340	—
Zhujiang Brigade	—	4,789	—

It should be borne in mind, however, that in fact only the "regular" formations (the 8th Route and New 4th armies) were relatively battleworthy. In terms of arms and equipment these armies were extremely weak. Moreover, it should also be remembered that these armies were performing primarily economic and propaganda functions, did not receive systematic military training or acquire combat skill in warfare against a serious enemy. The 8th Route and New 4th armies could become a force to be reckoned with only if they were given requisite assistance in training and rearmament. This was the state of the liberated areas and their armed forces when the talks on a coalition government and on the role of the liberated areas in the future China began between the CPC and the Guomindang.

The talks started in May 1944 in Xi'an under pressure of Chinese public opinion. The Guomindang representatives, aware of the situation in the liberated areas, were self-assured and impudent. Instead of terms which could help strengthen the United National Anti-Japanese Front, they faced the Communist Party with demands which, if implemented, would spell the end for the liberated areas. For instance, they insisted that the special status of the Shenganning area should be abolished and that it should be subordinated to the Executive Yuan, which was liable to appoint Guomindang officials to administrative posts in the area. Its budget was to be endorsed by the Chongqing government; issue of local money would be prohibited, with the previously issued banknotes to be withdrawn from circulation. As for the CPC, the vague phrase that its "activity should answer the demands of the war against Japan" actually meant that the Party was to be disbanded and absorbed by the Guomindang.

The Guomindang representatives insisted on subordinating the 8th Route and New 4th armies to the Guomindang High Command and eliminating guerilla troops and the peasant militia.

It is only natural that these demands put up an insurmountable barrier to agreement between the Guomindang and the CPC.

That the talks had actually been disrupted worried the US military representatives in China. General Stilwell held, for one, that although Japan had suffered a setback at sea, it was still strong and dangerous on land, with the territory of China and the adjacent territories of Southeast Asia becoming its main bridgehead. Stilwell maintained that while in terms of naval strategy the United States had already proved its superiority over Japan, superiority on land was yet to be proved and therefore a single anti-Japanese front in China was essential.³⁷ Stilwell's successors took a somewhat different view.

On their arrival in Chongqing US Ambassador Patrick Hurley and the new chief military adviser General Wedemeyer publicly condemned, on behalf of the United States, interference in affairs that were within Chiang Kaishek's competence. Hurley outlined his understanding of his mission in the following terms: "(1) To prevent the collapse of the National Government; (2)

To sustain Chiang Kaishek as President of the Republic and Generalissimo of the Armies; (3) To harmonize relations between the Generalissimo and the American Commander; (4) To promote production of war supplies in China and prevent economic collapse; (5) To unify all the military forces in China for the purpose of defeating Japan.”³⁸

General Wedemeyer, for his part, considered it his task to implement the plans of the US military command. They envisaged “providing for a northern front in China” by creating a vast network of airfields in North China and placing at the disposal of the US Navy a number of ports (so-called “closed ports”) in the Gulf of Liaodong and on the Shandong coast.* The Americans could secure implementation of these plans, and in particular access to North China, which was controlled by the Communists, only by supporting the idea of a coalition government and gradually subordinating the guerilla areas and the “communist armies” to Chiang Kaishek.

That is why, soon after his arrival in China, Ambassador Hurley went to the Shenganning area to mediate between Chongqing and Yan’an. His diplomatic game was aimed at securing for the US airforce and navy access to North China and creating a northern front there, which would play an important part in the future duel between the Guomindang and the CPC. US airfields and “closed ports” in North China would make it possible, if need be, to quickly move Guomindang forces, and provide air cover for them. Moreover, these bases and airfields could prove useful for the future anti-Soviet strategy.

On November 10, 1944, an agreement was signed under which both sides favoured a coalition government and a joint Chinese command. The agreement included the following five points:

“1) The Government of China, the Guomindang of China and the Communist Party of China will work together for the unification of all military forces in China for the immediate defeat of Japan and the reconstruction of China.

“2) The present National Government is to be reorganized into a coalition National Government embracing representatives of all anti-Japanese parties and non-partisan political bodies.

* The ports he had in mind were Yinkou, Huludao, Qinwandao, Qingdao, Weihaiwei, and Yantai.

A new democratic policy providing for reform in military, political, economic and cultural affairs shall be promulgated and made effective. At the same time the National Military Council is to be reorganized into the United National Military Council consisting of representatives of all anti-Japanese armies.

“3) The coalition National Government will support the principles of Sun Yat-sen for the establishment in China of a government of the people, for the people and by the people. The coalition National Government will pursue policies designed to promote progress and democracy and to establish justice, freedom of conscience, freedom of press, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and association, the right to petition the government for the redress of grievances, the right of writ of habeas corpus and the right of residence. The coalition National Government will also pursue policies intended to make effective the two rights defined as freedom from fear and freedom from want.

“4) All anti-Japanese forces will observe and carry out the orders of the coalition National Government and its United National Military Council and will be recognized by the Government and the Military Council. The supplies acquired from foreign powers will equitably be distributed.

“5) The coalition National Government of China recognizes the legality of the Guomindang of China, the Chinese Communist Party and all anti-Japanese parties.”³⁹

Zhou Enlai and Hurley took the signed agreement to Chongqing. In Chongqing, they were given a cold reception and Hurley hastened to tell the press that he thought the main precondition for the implementation of the November 10 Agreement was the subordination of the guerilla areas and their armed forces to the Chongqing government and command.

On January 25, 1945, Zhou Enlai made a statement to foreign correspondents in Chongqing in which he pointed out that in November 1944 he, together with Hurley, arrived in Chongqing to discuss coalition government issues with representatives of the Guomindang, but that the change in Hurley’s approach to the matter was hampering the talks.⁴⁰

On February 17, 1945, when the failure of the Chongqing talks was obvious, Zhou Enlai left for Yan’an, while Hurley hurried to Washington.

On April 2, 1945, Hurley made an official statement in Washington to the effect that in future the United States would cooperate with Chiang Kaishek only.⁴¹ Shortly thereafter, General Wedemeyer ordered US officers in China not to aid persons and organisations not associated with the Chongqing government. The US military authorities in China increased supplies of arms and materiel to the Chiang Kaishek armies. The change in the US stand resulted in a sharp aggravation of the situation in China.

Chapter 7

The Defeat of Japanese Militarism

In the final stage of the war, especially after President Roosevelt's death, Japan manoeuvred desperately to avoid total defeat and surrender. The new US administration had a somewhat different approach to the problems in Asia, and for one, the problem of China.

Japanese Militarism's Last Manoeuvres

US President Harry Truman wanted the future China to be a loyal junior partner. What could interfere with those plans? Two forces—the Soviet Union and the Chinese Communists. Truman severely criticised Roosevelt for wanting to make peace between the Communists and the Guomindang in China.

Truman, however, also understood that because of the general elation over the end of the war in Europe it was impossible to make a direct and open break with the Soviet Union, renounce the Yalta decisions and declare that the United States alone would end the war against Japan. Not only in Europe and Asia would that be misunderstood and condemned, but also in the United States. Therefore, Truman sought another way. In his opinion the greatest danger to the United States lay in the Soviet armed forces joining the Communist-led People's Liberation Army in China in offensive operations. That was certainly a possibility, because the main forces of China's People's Liberation Army were on liberated territory and the partisan areas of North China, and if Soviet forces began military operations against the Kwantung Army in Manchuria they could easily establish contact and coordinate their operations with China's people's liberation forces.

Consequently, the United States and Chiang Kaishek did not hinder the Japanese command which at that time was regrouping. The regrouping of Japanese fronts and armies had begun in the latter half of May following a decision of the High Command Council at a meeting on May 11-14, 1945, which discussed measures to rebuff a possible Soviet advance in Manchuria. It was at this meeting that the slogan "100-year war for the Empire" was first formulated. The slogan was not entirely unrealistic. Japan had resources enough to wage a long and bloody armed struggle. It still had an efficient land army, which at that time numbered over six million officers and men; reserves were constantly under training; there was a three million-strong union of reservists who were especially active in the last years of the war; military training was conducted in schools; and the people got traditional training in the spirit of self-sacrifice. The China theatre was considered the most important, along with the Japanese islands. Most of the Japanese expeditionary army had been transferred to the northern bank of the Huanghe and, if necessary, could be sent quickly to the borders of Manchuria and the Mongolian People's Republic, or could begin operations jointly with the Guomindang against the Communist-led People's Liberation Army in North China.*

The Japanese command planned that if Soviet forces began an offensive against the Kwantung Army in Manchuria, Japanese troops concentrated north of the Huanghe would isolate the Soviet army and Manchuria from the people's liberation forces in North China.

The US command, which was aware of the situation, took steps to reinforce its airforce in China and accelerate Chiang Kaishek's military preparations in case of a civil war. Additional

advisers were sent to China to reorganise and train 20 crack Chiang Kaishek divisions.¹

Meanwhile, the United States tried to hurry up the development of the atomic bomb in order to demonstrate the strength of its new weapon before the Soviet Union entered the war against Japan.

Notice was taken in Tokyo of the gradual change in relations between the Soviet Union and the United States. Prince Fumimaro Konoye and other Japanese leaders felt these relations could worsen if a separate deal were reached with the United States at China's expense. In order to undermine the prestige of the Soviet Union in the eyes of the Chinese and other Asian peoples, Konoye again proposed inviting the government of the Soviet Union as a mediator in Japanese-American peace talks. He was ready to go to Moscow himself to "propose that the Soviet side become the mediator in peace talks".² However, Moscow did not reply to Tokyo's request for Konoye's visit and thus the provocation of Japanese diplomacy failed.

Ruling circles in Japan could not reconcile themselves to the prospect of losing China. Although the Japanese, after thoroughly studying the situation in Chongqing, concluded that Chiang Kaishek was increasingly controlled by the United States and therefore could not enter into direct negotiations with representatives of Japan, attempts to establish contact with Chongqing continued.³

One such attempt was made by generals and other senior officers of the Japanese expeditionary army in China, among whom there was a clandestine group that favoured peace with Chiang Kaishek. This secret group was led by Major-General Takeo Imai and colonels Shibayama and Kagesa.⁴ Through the brother of the Chief of the General Staff of the Nanking puppet army, General Yan Cheng, they got in touch with Colonel Li Yao who, at their request, met with the commander of the 10th reserve military zone and the 15th Guomindang Army Group in the southern part of Henan Province, General He Zhongguo, and gave him letters from the Japanese advocates of separate talks with Chiang Kaishek.

Li Yao got General He Zhongguo to agree to a meeting with General Imai. In fact the Guomindang general promised to

* On May 26, 1945, units of the 1st, 12th and 43rd armies appeared in the Pingdiqian-Baotou-Suiyuan triangle. Meanwhile units of the 11th and 13th armies were sent from Central China northward. Unquestionably, the Japanese command was setting up a strong force in North China near the borders of Manchuria and the Mongolian People's Republic. Thus, the Soviet Union was being threatened by the combined force of the 1st, 3rd and 17th fronts, the 4th, 11th and 13th independent armies (those directly in the staging area in Manchuria and Korea were the 1st, 3rd and 17th fronts, the 4th independent army and the 2nd and 5th air armies). Also see Hattori Sakushiro, *Daitoa senso zenshi*.

get in touch with Chongqing and get Chiang Kaishek interested in the meeting. Thorough preparations were made for the meeting, and in the middle of June 1945 Imai received a radiogram from Li Yao saying that General He Zhongguo was ready to meet him at his headquarters in the village of Zhoujiagou on July 9.

Imai consulted with those who shared his views, some of whom were doubtful. However, since Japan's defeat seemed imminent, most of his friends, hoping to do "at least something to save the nation, the imperial regime and the military leadership", were in favour of the meeting. On July 9 General Imai and communications officer Gondo, dressed in Chinese uniforms, passed through the line of patrols and were taken to He Zhongguo's headquarters.

At the first meeting with He Zhongguo, in reply to Imai's question regarding the possibility of direct peace talks between Japan and China, He Zhongguo said, "Direct peace talks between Japan and China are impossible. Japan will have to conduct talks with the allies. But we must report to Chiang Kaishek that representatives of Japan are willing to negotiate directly with China. What peace terms can Japan propose?" Imai had to say that he was only representing a group in the command and had no authority to propose anything; he could only report the position of the Chinese side to the command of the Japanese army in China and through it notify the Japanese government. All that he was asked to convey was the immense interest his colleagues had in maintaining the integrity of Japanese territory, protecting the rights and the system of imperial government, and an "expedient" solution to the problem of the Manchukuo and Nanking regimes.

He Zhongguo repeated that China could no longer conduct peace talks with Japan on its own because this was up to the Allied powers; just as only they could decide the future of Korea, Taiwan, South Sakhalin and the Pescadore Islands. As for preserving the imperial regime in Japan, Chiang Kaishek was against destroying the political system in Japan after it was defeated.

Imai said that he would report this to commander Okamura and through him to the Japanese government. He Zhongguo, for his part, promised to tell Chiang Kaishek of their conver-

sation. They met another three times, after which Imai and Gondo, heavily protected, went back to Nanking, arriving there on July 14, 1945.⁵ On the surface, this was another failure. However, it came out later that when they were parting, He Zhongguo asked Imai to tell Okamura that "under the circumstances the Japanese army could also play an important role after surrendering".⁶ This was a hint that Chiang Kaishek was counting on the Japanese army in the diplomatic game and struggle against the people's liberation movement in China.

The headquarters of the Japanese expeditionary army in China already knew about the schemes of the Chinese reactionaries, and therefore revised its plans for the spring-summer campaign of 1945. It also took account of the relative passivity of the guerilla forces and planned to seize the main railways and roads leading to the borders of Manchuria and the Mongolian People's Republic. With this objective, the 26th, 55th, 59th, 62nd, 63rd and 110th infantry divisions were ordered to consolidate along the communication routes in the following directions: Tianjin-Ginzhou, Mukden-Ginzhou, Peking-Kalgan, Datung-Kalgan-Rehe, Datung-Pingdiqian, Datung-Baotou.⁷

These routes were near or on the territory of guerilla bases in North China. Consequently, the 8th Route Army and guerilla columns could engage the Japanese aggressor in active warfare and exercise a direct influence on the situation that had developed because of the Soviet Union's consent to enter the war against imperialist Japan in the Far East. However, in Yan'an efforts were centred more on seeking ways to use the United States in schemes that would give it the upper hand in a future coalition government. The thinking there was that the Soviet Union was much weakened by the war, and was probably in no condition to seriously influence political developments in the Far East, while the United States had become even stronger and would determine the fate of the Far East, as well as of all Asia.

Hence, the Yan'an leaders, limiting their activities to "watching" the Japanese regroup, concentrated on "diplomatic moves". American representatives gained free access to the Shenganning guerilla area. Meanwhile, the Yan'an leaders did everything they could to demonstrate their growing strength. This was intended, on the one hand, to show the American "allies"

that the CPC and the liberated areas were a decisive force in China's domestic policy and, on the other, to scare the Guomindang government into being more compliant about setting up a coalition government.

Japan Surrenders

At the end of April 1945, some prestigious newspapers with large circulations (the *Asahi*, *Tokyo nichinichi*, *Yomiuri*, and others) reported that differences had arisen between the Soviet Union, the United States and Britain over the final phase of the advance to Berlin. The reports said that a military clash was possible between the Soviet and American armies.

Against this backdrop there were rumours that Fumimaro Konoye, former premier who had headed several wartime cabinets, was trying to prevail on the Emperor to conclude peace with the United States and Britain, which would inevitably be followed by "a peace treaty with Chiang Kaishek". Indeed, former Japanese statesmen and military leaders in the opposition were hotly discussing what terms for peace could be proposed to the United States and Britain.

However, at the very time when people argued over the content of the future separate talks with the governments of the United States and Britain, and a "pro-American and pro-British" government was being formed on paper, Nazi Germany signed the instrument of unconditional surrender. This changed the situation radically. Nevertheless, government circles in Japan hoped that the differences between the Allies would grow deeper, that "the success of the Russians in Berlin would, on the contrary, lead to contradictions and malevolence and possibly to a split".⁸

Tokyo was discomfited when it was reported that Harry Hopkins, special envoy of the US President, had arrived in Moscow for talks that the Japanese assumed would touch on future policy towards Japan.⁹ That meeting, which was held on May 25-28, 1945, disturbed Japanese statesmen and political leaders who advocated peace with the United States and Britain. It became known in Tokyo that Hopkins was told in no uncertain terms that the Soviet Union favoured Japan's

military defeat and unconditional surrender. It was understood in Tokyo that this Soviet position made it impossible to conclude peace with the United States and Britain, and left no hope that the Soviet government would agree to mediate in peace talks between Japan, on one side, and the United States and Britain, on the other.

The Potsdam Declaration of July 26, 1945 calling for Japan's unconditional surrender was seen in Tokyo as a signal to begin the "100-year war for the Empire". However, the Suzuki government realised that Japan was doomed and that it could not withstand the strength of the Soviet Army on the Manchurian-Chinese front. The Soviet Union's determination to get Japan to surrender unconditionally in the shortest possible time also disturbed the United States and Chiang Kaishek. American propaganda began spreading the idea that long preparations were needed before American troops could be landed on the Japanese islands, and no earlier than 1947 at that. At the same time, the Truman administration was anxious for the Soviet Union to understand that the United States regarded Japan and China as its own sphere of influence. On August 6, 1945, the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and on August 9, on Nagasaki.

As a result of the atomic bombings, some 102,000 people were killed, some 16,000 were missing, some 61,000 were wounded and 324,000 suffered burns and contracted the radiation sickness. There were over 503,000 casualties in all.¹⁰ Thousands of Japanese were doomed to a slow death from radiation for decades to come.

The atomic bombing of Japanese civilians was an act of senseless brutality. The bomb was used for political rather than military reasons. It demonstrated the United States' desire to strengthen its military, political and diplomatic positions, secure its strategic superiority over the Soviet Union, and its intention to use the destructive force of the new weapon as blackmail in a bid for supremacy in the postwar world. Chiang Kaishek said in so many words that the American atomic bomb was a warning not only to the Soviet Union but also to the Communists in China.

Atomic blackmail, however, did not achieve its objectives. It was assumed in Washington that right after the atomic bom-

blings Japan would admit defeat. However, this did not happen. The Japanese leadership did not relinquish its plans to continue the war.

In the interests of ending World War II, securing its borders in the Far East, and eliminating a seat of aggression in Asia, and seeing that the Japanese government had refused to surrender unconditionally on the demands of the USSR's allies of the anti-Hitler coalition, the Soviet Union performed its duty to its allies and declared war on Japan on August 8, 1945. On August 9 the Soviet armed forces mounted an offensive against a major grouping of Japanese forces on the border. On August 10 the Mongolian People's Republic entered the war against Japan.

Even before the end of the war in Europe troops and weaponry had been transferred from the West to the East. Between May and August the number of divisions in the Far East increased from 59.5 to 87.5. Over 7,000 guns and mortars and over 2,000 tanks and self-propelled guns were sent there.¹¹ The main aim of the Far Eastern campaign was to eliminate the powerful Japanese Kwantung Army and liberate the northeastern provinces of China, North Korea, South Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands from the aggressors.

By the beginning of August 1945, the Japanese had 17 fortified zones near the borders of the Soviet Union and the Mongolian People's Republic. The total length of the fortifications, including over 4,500 longterm structures, was close to 800 kilometres. The Kwantung Army was the backbone of the strategic group of Japanese and puppet forces. These forces included two fronts and two separate armies (24 infantry divisions, 9 mixed brigades, 2 tank brigades and a Kamikaze brigade), the 2nd Air Army, and a flotilla of river warships on the Sungari. When the Soviet offensive began, the Japanese forces consisted of 1 million men, 1,215 tanks, 6,640 guns and mortars, 26 ships and 1,907 combat planes.¹²

The Soviet force included three fronts (the Transbaikal and the 1st and 2nd Far Eastern), the Pacific Fleet and the Amur river flotilla. Eleven armies, one tank and three air armies, and 3 anti-aircraft armies were concentrated for the offensive. They included the headquarters of 33 corps, 131 divisions and 117 brigades, and 21 fortified zones. The Soviet force numbered

1,747,000 men, around 30,000 guns and mortars, 5,250 tanks and self-propelled guns, over 5,170 combat aircraft and 93 warships.¹³ The Mongolian People's Revolutionary Army functioned as an arm of the Transbaikal Front.

Before launching the operation, the Commander-in-Chief of Soviet forces in the Far East, Marshal A.M. Vasilevsky, made the following statement to the Chinese people: "The Red Army, the army of the great Soviet people, is coming to help allied China and the friendly Chinese people. Here in the East, it is also raising its banners as an army that is liberating the peoples of China, Manchuria, and Korea from Japanese oppression and enslavement."¹⁴

When the command of the people's liberation forces of China heard of the Soviet Union having declared war on Japan, it sent a telegram to the Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, Joseph Stalin: "On behalf of the Chinese people we warmly welcome the Soviet Government's declaration of war on Japan. The 100-million population and armed forces of the liberated areas of China will do everything to coordinate their efforts with the Red Army and the armies of other Allied nations in the drive to defeat the hateful Japanese invaders."¹⁵

Soviet troops began the advance in the early morning hours of August 9. On a broad front they crossed the frontier, crushed the Japanese border force and entered the territory of Inner Mongolia and Manchuria simultaneously from the west, north and east. Soviet bombers hit enemy military installations in Harbin, Changchong, and Jilin and rearward army positions. On reaching communication lines in the Sea of Japan connecting Korea and Manchuria with Japan, the Pacific Fleet blockaded them and attacked North Korean ports from the sea and air.

The suddenness and power of the Soviet assault caused confusion in Japanese ruling circles. On August 9, the Emperor called an emergency conference. Japan's War Minister Anami rejected the Potsdam Declaration, and said: "We must fulfil our duty to the Emperor even if our whole nation perishes. There is no doubt that we must fight to the last and that we are strong enough to wage war."¹⁶

On August 9, the Emperor of Japan ordered the Kwantung Army to put up a stiff resistance and to prepare large opera-

tions. But by the end of the day reports began coming in that Japanese troops were incapable of withstanding the assault of the Soviet Armed Forces.

The Soviet advance created favourable conditions for the people's liberation forces of China. On August 11, Commander-in-Chief Zhu De signed an order for the 8th Route Army to mount a counter-offensive against the Japanese. However, the advance of Soviet-Mongolian troops was so rapid that they crushed the Kwantung Army before the 8th Route Army could even begin combat. More, the operations of the Soviet fronts, notably the Transbaikal Front, were most timely, because part of the 8th Route Army in the area of Pingquang were at that moment encircled by the Japanese. "We are particularly grateful to the Red Army of the Soviet Union," General Zhao Wenjin wrote to the Soviet command, "for we were in extremely difficult straits. We were up against a far superior enemy who had encircled us and had cut off all avenues of retreat and restricted our ability to manoeuvre. On the eve of August 9 we were looking for a way out of this tight spot. The entry of the Soviet Red Army into Manchuria on August 9 has radically changed the balance of strength. We turned from defence to offence. Thus, the Red Army saved us from destruction, and we are grateful to it."¹⁷

The Soviet advance and the threat of an Allied landing in Japan compelled the Japanese government to sue for peace. On August 14 it declared to the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, and China that it accepted the terms of the Potsdam Declaration. The Suzuki cabinet resigned. On August 17, General Yamada, Commander of the Kwantung Army, addressed Marshal A.M. Vasilevsky with a cease-fire proposal. But Japanese troops in many sectors of the front continued to resist stubbornly and fiercely. For this reason, Marshal Vasilevsky proposed to the command of the Kwantung Army that it should "at 12 hours August 20 cease all resistance to Soviet forces along the entire front, lay down arms and surrender. . . As soon as Japanese troops begin laying down arms, the Soviet forces will cease fire."¹⁸

By August 19 Kwantung Army units in most of Manchuria and in North Korea laid down arms. Tens of thousands surrendered. Soviet airborne troops were landed in major cities

and naval bases of Manchuria, North Korea, South Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands to expedite the disarming and internment of the surrendered troops, and prevent any destruction of industrial plants and other facilities. By the end of August the entire Kwantung Army was disarmed and interned.

On August 20, the three Soviet fronts made contact in the centre of Manchuria and liberated the big cities and administrative and industrial centres of Northeast China—Harbin, Jilin, Changchun, and Mukden.

All Inner Mongolia and Manchuria, 1,312,000 square kilometres inhabited by over 40 million people, were completely liberated from the Japanese invaders. The puppet state of Manchukuo set up by the Japanese militarists in 1932 ceased to exist. "Emperor" Pu Yi was taken prisoner in Mukden by a Soviet landing party.

Soviet troops saved the lives of many Allied prisoners-of-war held by the Japanese. For instance, on the outskirts of Mukden was a camp of over 2,000 pows, mainly Americans. In a spontaneous meeting a US soldier, Alexander Baby, expressed his gratitude to the liberators. He said Russian troops brought freedom to men who had spent three and a half years in the Japanese prison camp. No words, he said, could describe the cruelty of the Japanese. This ordinary US soldier voiced his gratitude and affection to the Russians. None of us, he said, would ever forget this day. Calling the American and Soviet people friends for life, the soldier said they bequeathed this friendship to their children.¹⁹ Among the liberated pows were British Air Marshal Paul Maltby and US corps and division commanders and other generals and officers.

The Far Eastern campaign of the Soviet Armed Forces lasted 23 days. It was the shortest of the entire war and was conducted within the framework of one strategic operation. But in scale, scope, dynamics and end results it was one of the most important battles of World War II. Combat operations swept a front of over 5,000 kilometres, taking in territory of 1.5 million square kilometres with a population of 70 million.²⁰

Successive assaults on the major group of Japanese forces near the borders of the Soviet Union and the Mongolian People's Republic led to its defeat, Japan lost control over Manchuria and North Korea. The military and political situation in Asia

changed radically. This brought closer the end of World War II, and saved the lives of many thousands of American and British officers and men, and also spared the Japanese people more losses and suffering.

The Soviet forces captured much war booty. The troops of three fronts alone seized 4,300 enemy guns and mortars (grenade launchers), 686 tanks, 861 aircraft, over 13,000 machine-guns, 2,321 lorries, and other weapons and equipment. Japanese losses added up to about 700,000 officers and men, including 594,000 taken prisoner. Among the prisoners were 148 generals.²¹

A constant military threat to the Soviet Far East and the Mongolian People's Republic was eliminated, and good conditions were created for China's liberation. The great victory of the Soviet Armed Forces predetermined the defeat of militarist Japan and brought closer the end of World War II. Japan's unconditional surrender was signed on September 2, 1945.

During the Soviet advance in Manchuria the Japanese army in China went on the defensive everywhere. The prepared group of forces of the 6th Front in North China did not get to entraining stations in time although the order had been given. Yan'an, too, had not expected so rapid a course of events in Manchuria. The 8th Route Army remained in place until August 11. A plan was put forth in which the next goal of the 8th Route Army was to "clear out the central and western part of Henan", mobilise the population there and continue the advance southward to join up with units of the New 4th Army.²² But at that time something happened that had not been foreseen in Yan'an.

On August 12, 1945, Chiang Kaishek's order to "mop up North China"²³ was intercepted by the 8th Route Army. A force under General Fu Zuoyi was to reach the line of Datong-Jining by August 28 and a force under General Yan Xishan to wipe out the guerilla area in the southeastern part of Shanxi. General Hu Zongnan's troops were to cross Yan Xishan's battlelines and concentrate in the Peking-Tianjin area.

On August 11, Chiang Kaishek instructed Zhu De and Peng Dehuai to wait for further orders from his main headquarters before moving the 8th Route Army. Units of the 8th Route

Army at their stations or on the march were to come under the orders of the commanders of corresponding military zones and follow only their orders with regard to disarming the surrendering Japanese and puppet troops. The administrative and political arrangements in areas cleared of the enemy were to be established by Guomindang military authorities. Chiang Kaishek warned that failure to follow his order could undermine China's prestige in the eyes of the Allies.²⁴

In this way, Chiang Kaishek strove to paralyse the People's Liberation Army and use the situation for subsequently eliminating the PLA and the guerilla areas. On August 28, 1945, General Fu Zuoyi reached the Datong-Jining line and came into contact with units of the 8th Route Army and guerilla detachments defending the border of the guerilla area. Fu Zuoyi's advance into Shandong unexpectedly provoked resistance on the part of the Guomindang generals commanding local forces. They did not want Shandong to be occupied by Chongqing forces. And Yan Xishan was against Hu Zongnan straddling the Lunghai railway because he feared that Hu would then remain in Shanxi.²⁵ The true situation was not known in Chongqing, which focussed its attention on preparing for the imminent clash with the 8th Route and New 4th armies. On August 11, Chiang Kaishek cabled a circular to Japanese garrisons in China. It warned the Japanese command that it should surrender only to the Chongqing Army, and could ignore, and resist, surrender demands from any other forces. Zhu De, 8th Route Army Commander, sent Chiang Kaishek a protest over the circular. He wrote: "You have given an extremely dangerous order to your troops. The order essentially lets the enemy use weapons against the 8th Route and New 4th armies. I ask and demand an end to domestic warfare. The liberated areas and their armies should take part in settling all problems related to Japan's surrender."²⁶

Between August and September 1945, forty-nine Guomindang armies (127 infantry divisions) with a total of over one million officers and men, advanced to the borders of the liberated areas on the pretext of "accepting" the Japanese surrender. Over 150,000 Japanese troops not yet disarmed were also used. Five divisions of the 52nd and 13th Guomindang armies were supposed to land in Manchuria. Seven armies (18 divisions) fit-

ted out with US arms were specially designated to fight the People's Liberation Army.²⁷

On September 8, 1945, Chiang Kaishek spoke in Chongqing at a conference of plans to rearm the army "in accordance with the demands of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the United States and of Britain".²⁸ Chiang Kaishek also said the US command had agreed to "assist" in training troops and covering combat of the Guomindang Army in "the final operations".²⁹

Soon the United States began openly interfering in China's internal affairs. Between September and October 1945, US Marines landed in ports of North and Northeast China with the objective of assuming advantageous tactical positions to assist the Guomindang armies in their assault on the liberated areas. On October 7, 1945, the Chief-of-Staff of the 8th Route Army, Ye Jianying, on behalf of Commander Zhu De, sent a protest to the US command, complaining of preparations for a Marine landing in Yinkou, Chifu, and Weihaiwei. He pointed out that the command of the 8th Route Army "cannot understand the objectives of the US landing in these ports since there are no Japanese troops there and they are fully controlled by the forces of our army."³⁰ When US warships appeared off Chifu, Zhu De sent the US command a cable saying the city of Chifu was liberated by the People's Liberation Army on August 24. The Japanese and puppet troops there were disarmed. Order had been established in the city. There was absolutely no need for US troops to land there. Hence, the US command must order the Marines to leave the city and the port, and to discontinue further landing. If US troops should land by force and thus create a serious incident, the responsibility for it would rest with the US command.

The US Marines continued landing in Qingdao, Tagu, and other ports in East China. Meanwhile, they rapidly built airfields. Using hundreds of transport aircraft and ships, and thousands of motor vehicles, they hastily moved Guomindang troops north in furtherance of the "northern front" plan which Albert C. Wedemeyer had once brought from Washington to Chongqing. The quick advance of the Soviet armed forces, on one hand, and Chiang Kaishek's obvious designs to start a civil war with US help, on the other, convinced the command of the 8th Route Army that the liberation struggle could only be

successful in close cooperation with, and with the assistance of the Soviet armed forces. However, the command of the 8th Route and New 4th armies did not have the strength to carry out their tasks simultaneously in Manchuria and in North and Central China. Furthermore, Japanese forces supported by Chiang Kaishek's Guomindang government, fiercely resisted the 8th Route and New 4th armies. Still, thanks to the Soviet victory in Manchuria, in one month of heavy fighting with Japanese and puppet troops (from August 15 through September 15, 1945) Communist-led forces captured tactically important towns with relative ease (Shanhaiguan, Jinwangdao, Chifu, Weihaiwei, Zhangjiangkou, Pingdiqian, Rehe and others) in North China. As for Central China, they only managed to approach some of the major towns.

The Soviet Union's policy was aimed at rendering sincere help to the Chinese people in its struggle for freedom and independence: and it consistently upheld the principle of rallying all progressive forces in the effort to deliver China and other peoples in Asia from imperialist exploitation.

The Role and Significance of the China Theatre During World War II As Seen By Chinese Authors

The literature brought out in the People's Republic of China up to and in the late 1950s contained a fair analysis of events and proved the enormous importance of the international fraternal cooperation between the Chinese and Soviet peoples and their Communist parties in the course of the struggle. It acknowledged the fact that the Soviet Union's entry into the war against militarist Japan in early August 1945 was a turning point in the history of China and played a decisive role in the liberation of the Chinese people from the colonial yoke of Japanese militarism. However, in the late 1950s some historians began to deny many of the gains attained by the Chinese people during the anti-Japanese war and in the first decade following the victory of the people's revolution, when China, helped by the USSR, embarked upon socialist construction and ideological and cultural revival based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism, and when achievements in many fields of science were

introduced in the life of the Chinese people and contributed to Chinese and world science. Some Chinese historians began depreciating the USSR's decisive role in defeating German fascism and Japanese militarism during World War II and denying the Soviet army's liberative mission in regard to the Chinese, Korean, Mongolian and other Asian peoples, i.e., the rout of the Kwantung Army, Japan's main ground force, in Manchuria and North Korea. They denied the obvious fact that the Soviet Union's victory over fascism and militarism in World War II aggravated and speeded up the crisis and disintegration of imperialism's colonial system, giving impetus to the national liberation and anticolonial movement of peoples, securing the political independence of many former colonies.

The following two publications of 1978 and 1982 provide a clear picture of how the events of World War II, particularly of the Sino-Japanese war, are being falsified. The first, an article entitled "The Initial Moment of World War II" by Wang Zhende and Hou Chengde in the *Guangming ribao* of July 5, 1978, calls on its readers to revise the "established notions" about World War II and "restore its true face".

The second publication, *A History of World War II* (Dierci shize dazhan shi), by Zhu Guisheng, Wang Zhende and Zhang Chunnian, put out by Renmin Chubanshe Publishers of Peking in 1982, consists of a Preface by Prof. Liu Ximu, Director of the PRC Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of World History, and fifteen chapters which, according to the author of the Preface, present a "systematic account of the events of World War II". The authors of this large volume (734 pages) promise to "show the true essence of World War II on the basis of an analysis of the most varied judgements . . . to separate all that is right from all that is erroneous, in order to restore the true history of World War II and to expand knowledge about the origins of contemporary wars, their essence and regularities".³¹ The authors go out of their way to throw light on the place and role of the anti-Japanese war, since, in their opinion, literature on the history of World War II published abroad "does not provide an adequate account of the anti-Japanese war."³² Thus, the authors allege that "the China front played a decisive role in World War II", that it pinned down the bulk of Japan's ground forces which, in turn, greatly influenced the ope-

rations in the other theatres of the war, and that the heroic eight-year anti-Japanese war of the Chinese people prevented the Japanese aggressors from "invading Australia and India, and also attacking the socialist Soviet Union in the north".³³ Thus, the Chinese reader is made to believe that the Soviet Union, which achieved a historic victory over Nazi Germany and imperialist Japan, had done little or nothing to save the world from colonial enslavement by German fascism and Japanese militarism. Although the authors acknowledge that the Soviet victory in the Battle of Stalingrad and victories in the 1943 Summer Offensive marked the turning point of World War II, they allege that the Soviet Union's victory in World War II would have been impossible in the absence of US aid in arms, equipment and raw materials. The Chinese historians disregard the fact that the Allied shipments of supplies in 1942, the most trying year of the war for the Soviet Union, were insignificant, with only 55 per cent of the promised programme being fulfilled. In the autumn of 1942, during the bitter fighting for Stalingrad and the Caucasus, the governments of Great Britain and the United States scaled down aid in arms and equipment to the Soviet Union.³⁴ The Chinese authors mention the heroism of Soviet workers, peasants and intelligentsia, who worked hard on the home front to provide the army with the necessary arms, equipment and food. At the same time, they exaggerate the limited supplies provided to the USSR by the capitalist Allies both in terms of quality and quantity.

While claiming that the China Theatre had played the decisive role in World War II, some Chinese historians do not take the trouble to count the armies and resources of the Chinese and Japanese sides from June 1941 to September 1945. If they had counted them, they would have discovered that due to the passive resistance to the Japanese aggressors on the part of Guomindang's regular armies and the self-isolated Border Areas and guerilla bases of China, and owing to the frequent punitive operations of Japanese detachments, the Chongqing armies and the army of the pro-Japanese puppet Nanking regime, the Japanese command was able to transfer six divisions and three brigades from the China Theatre to reinforce its defences in the Pacific and in Southeast Asia. This transfer was begun in late 1942 and lasted through 1943, when the imperial army in

the Pacific went on the defensive. Starting from the second half of 1944 and up to March 1945, seven divisions were transferred from North and Central China to Manchuria and North Korea to reinforce the Kwantung Army. It follows that during this period the China Theatre did not draw Japanese troops away from Manchuria, Korea or the Pacific. On the contrary, some Japanese troops were sent from the China Theatre to fight US and British forces in the Pacific, and others to reinforce the troops in Manchuria and Korea for the prospective war against the USSR.

It is common knowledge that the Soviet Union and its armed forces were in an extremely difficult position as a result of Hitler's treacherous attack on the USSR on June 22, 1941, when Nazi troops thrust rapidly deep into Soviet territory so that large industrial plants had to be evacuated from the country's West and Southwest to eastern regions and converted to war production. On learning of Japan's war preparations against the USSR in July 1941, Soviet representatives in Yan'an appealed to the leadership of the Communist Party of China to thwart the massing of Japanese troops near the Soviet border in the Peiping-Kalgan and Baotou sectors and thereby help the Soviet Union. The leaders of the Communist Party of China, however, failed to respond to this appeal. Mao Zedong stated: "In the event of war between Japan and the USSR, we will conduct only minor operations, without using large forces, for we have to preserve our strength. In the course of the war we will act according to the situation."³⁵ Later, when the situation became favourable for active operations by the CPC troops, its leaders asserted that their chief aim was to "amass and train forces" for future battles. This undoubtedly played into the hands of the Japanese command, for it is much easier to contain a passive enemy than to lose men fighting an active enemy.

Some Chinese historians misrepresent Soviet policy on the eve and in the beginning of World War II. They interpret the Soviet liberative campaign carried out at the request of the working people of the Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia in 1939, and aimed at helping the peoples of these regions to reunite with the USSR, as an "invasion of Poland", and also complain of an "annexation" of part of Romania. They also hold that the incorporation of Bessarabia and North-

ern Bukovina in the USSR and the accession of the Baltic States was accomplished due to Soviet ultimatums that they reorganise their governments and that Soviet troops enter their territories.³⁶ These authors also describe as an act of violence the moving of the USSR border westwards, which was aimed at strengthening the country's defence capacity in face of the threat to the USSR of being attacked by imperialist states, namely Nazi Germany and its allies.

It is of interest to recall how the Chinese leadership had responded to the liberation of the western territories of the Ukraine and Byelorussia from the reactionary, nationalist regime of bourgeois Poland. In an article entitled "The Unity of Interests of the Soviet Union and of All Mankind" (September 28, 1939), Mao Zedong maintained that the policy of the Soviet Union in regard to Poland was a just and timely one. He wrote: "The vast territories inhabited by Byelorussians and Ukrainians were forcibly torn away from Soviet Russia by German imperialists in 1918 under the terms of the Brest-Litovsk Peace, and, later, under the Versailles Treaty, were just as forcibly handed over to the reactionary government of Poland. The Soviet Union has now only returned its lost territories, freed the oppressed Byelorussians and Ukrainians, and rescued them from the threat of falling into German slavery. News dispatches show how these people welcome the Red Army as their liberator. . . This proves that the war conducted by the USSR is a just, non-aggressive war of liberation that helps to free minor nationalities, as well as the broad masses. As concerns the war waged by Germany and by Britain and France, it is an unjust, aggressive and imperialist war on both sides, a war to oppress other nations and peoples."³⁷

The misinterpretation of the history of World War II by some Chinese historians resulted, above all, from their erroneous view of the origin and nature of World War II.

Scholars who proceed in their studies from the Marxist-Leninist teaching have long since and quite convincingly revealed the motives and social essence of World War II. It evolved within the capitalist camp as a result of an acute aggravation of the contradictions between the countries of this camp, and on the strength of the law of the uneven development of capitalist countries. It was prepared and started by imperialism as a so-

cial system and in the first place by Nazi Germany, fascist Italy and militarist Japan, all of whom resorted to armed aggression against other countries and peoples in order to realise their wild plans of world supremacy.

One must also bear in mind that World War II erupted in a new historical epoch ushered in by the Great October Socialist Revolution, an epoch whose chief feature was and still is the contradiction between socialism and capitalism. That is why the militarist intentions of the two imperialist groups—the fascist states, on the one hand, and Britain, France and the USA, on the other—were nurtured by anti-Sovietism and directed against the USSR.

Of course, the chief contradiction of the epoch did not ease the contradictions within the imperialist camp, between its main groups of states. The antagonism between them increased steadily and culminated in World War II. It began as an imperialist and unjust war on both sides. However, as the masses became increasingly active in the struggle against the aggressors, the war took on an antifascist, liberative character. This process was completed when the USSR entered the war following Nazi Germany's treacherous attack and the emergence of the anti-Hitler coalition. The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people, a truly just war, was a most important part of World War II.

Such, in brief, are the motives and nature of World War II. The Sino-Japanese contradictions were not among the war's chief causes and did not predetermine the outbreak of that global conflagration.

It is evident that World War II did not flare up in an instant, but evolved in the course of many years. Its bloody landmarks were Italy's aggression in Ethiopia, the participation of Germany and Italy in the Spanish Civil War on the side of the fascist dictator General Franco, the Munich deal between the imperialist states, followed by the invasion of Austria and the nullification of Czechoslovakia's independence by Nazi troops.

The Japanese aggression in the Far East was also among the events that preceded World War II. The leaders of the USA and Britain encouraged and supported the Japanese militarists' seizure of Northeast China (Manchuria) and, later, North, Central and South China.

Some Chinese scholars overlook the fact that the events preceding World War II were interdependent, and provide their own false interpretation. The *Guangming ribao* (July 5, 1978) maintained that the events in Europe "did not form the theatre of war which directly became a part of World War II". They hold that World War II began on July 7, 1937, the day of the local armed clash between a company of Japanese soldiers and a unit of Chinese soldiers building fortifications near Marco Polo Bridge outside Lugouqiao, and not on September 1, 1939 when Nazi Germany attacked Poland. In accordance with the Japanese plans, this local conflict expanded rapidly into the eight-year Sino-Japanese war. What were the conditions in which the armed clash of a local, tactical nature developed into the long Sino-Japanese war? After Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, the Soviet people, responding to the call of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet Government, rose up in the Great Patriotic War. The entire adult population of the Soviet Union united round the Communist Party and the Soviet Government to defend their socialist Motherland. At the cost of tremendous losses, Soviet troops resisted the enemy, wearing him out, containing his offensives and wrecking the Nazi plans of a *blitzkrieg*. The socialist system was one of the factors that made it possible for the Soviet troops at the front lines and the guerilla forces in the enemy's rear to withstand the onslaught of the superior Nazi force.

Historians in many countries acknowledge the fact that World War II began on September 1, 1939, when Nazi Germany attacked Poland. Two days later, Great Britain, France, Australia and New Zealand, and later Canada declared war on Germany while after the conflict at Marco Polo Bridge no country declared war on Japan. The Soviet Union was the only nation to come to the aid of the Chinese people.

The July 1937 incident was just another event in the Sino-Japanese War. It neither grew into a worldwide armed conflict, nor was it its starting point, as certain Chinese historians assert. Not until September 1939 did the China Theatre become a part of World War II and acquired certain strategic significance.

As concerns the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), it was divided by both Chinese and Japanese historians into two stages.

The first began with the conflict at Marco Polo Bridge (July 7, 1937) and lasted until the beginning of the war in the Pacific (December 1941); the second stage began in December 1941 and ended in September 1945, when militarist Japan was defeated and surrendered. In official Japanese and Chinese diplomatic documents, as well as in West European historiography, the events of the above periods are referred to as the Sino-Japanese war.

The allegation of some Chinese authors that "China was in the forefront of the antifascist struggle in defence of world democracy and civilisation..."³⁸ is absolutely groundless.

After Nazi Germany invaded the USSR, the Soviet-German front became the major front of World War II. There the aggressor's main force was concentrated and defeated. During various periods of the war, from 190 to 270 Nazi divisions (Germany's or of its allies) were active on the Soviet-German front, whereas the British-American forces were resisted by 9 to 20 divisions in North Africa (1941-1943), by 7 to 26 divisions in Italy (1943-1945), and by 56 to 75 divisions in Western Europe after the opening of the Second Front in Europe.

The Soviet forces routed or took prisoner 607 enemy divisions, while British and US forces defeated or took prisoner 176. On the Soviet-German front the Nazis lost over 10 million people, over 70,000 aircraft (close to 70 per cent), nearly 50,000 tanks and assault guns (up to 75 per cent), 167,000 artillery guns (74 per cent), and over 2,500 ships.³⁹

Indeed, the front line of the struggle for civilisation was on the Soviet-German front, and ended with the rout of the Nazi aggressors. The Soviet Union also played the determining role in defeating militarist Japan by crushing its one million-strong Kwantung Army in a very short time.

The Axis always regarded the Soviet Union as its chief obstacle to world supremacy and as the main object of aggression. It must be noted that according to the Japanese militarists' strategic plans, China, with its vast territory, abundant manpower, and rich natural resources, was to serve as a springboard for a Japanese attack on the Soviet Union.

The anti-Soviet essence of these plans was reflected in a memorandum of a special conference of representatives of Japan's leading industrial companies, the military elite and high-ranking

government officials, which took place prior to Japan's invasion of Manchuria in 1931.

A Japanese secret document entitled "The Foreign Policy of the Empire", issued in 1936, reflected these anti-Soviet intentions with still greater clarity. It read, in part: "Taking into account the present state of Japanese-Soviet relations, in conducting the northern policy (the Japanese militarists' plans for seizing Soviet territory), attention in regard to China should be directed toward rapidly turning North China into an anticommunist and pro-Japanese-Manchurian zone, as well as toward making all of China anti-Soviet and pro-Japanese."⁴⁰

This gives one an idea of the place and role of China in the plans of the Japanese militarists. They were positive that an attack on China would not trigger a world war. At the war crimes trial in Tokyo, a draft "minimum programme", worked out in September 1941, was considered. It read, in part: "The United States and Great Britain will not interfere in the settling of the China Incident and will do nothing to stop it... The United States will not render the Chiang Kaishek government either military or economic aid."⁴¹

There was good reason for the Japanese militarists to count on China's division and internal strife. They rightly expected no resistance from the puppet Wang Jingwei government in Nanking. They counted on the surrender or passiveness of the Chiang Kaishek government, and were not far wrong. Moreover, from 1941 to 1945 eleven meetings at various levels were held by Japanese and Guomindang representatives at which separate negotiations were conducted concerning the surrender of the Chiang Kaishek government and the conclusion of a Sino-Japanese military-political alliance "for combatting communism".

It should be pointed out that up to the end of 1941 the Guomindang government of China had refrained from declaring war on Japan.

Mao Zedong and his closest associates in Yan'an did not insist on declaring war on the aggressors who had occupied the country's most important regions and industrial cities. Starting with 1939 and up to the end of World War II, neither the Guomindang nor the 8th Route and New 4th people's liber-

ation armies had launched a single major offensive against the Japanese troops. Meanwhile, from the end of 1942 on, the Japanese armed forces in the Pacific went over strategic defence and experienced considerable difficulties in face of an Anglo-American offensive. China also failed to make use of the favourable situation for active military operations against the Japanese aggressors after the historic victories of the Soviet armed forces at Stalingrad and the Kursk Salient, and the subsequent large-scale strategic offensive.

In referring to these facts, we by no means wish to belittle the heroic struggle of the Chinese people and of all true Chinese Communists. The working people of China, its progressive intelligentsia and students, had worked for united action and gravitated towards the Communists, whom they viewed as the chief cementing force of the people's liberation front. The history of the anti-Japanese armed struggle of 1937-1945 offers many examples of mass heroism displayed by Chinese soldiers, guerrillas and militiamen in the course of the unequal struggle against the Japanese, during which they often gained victories over the invaders.

Time and again, the Chinese patriots expressed their dissatisfaction with the reactionary Guomindang leadership which looked on passively while Japanese invaders plundered the country's national wealth and annihilated its culture. These patriots gave all their strength and even their lives to the struggle for China's sovereignty and national independence. However, it was their misfortune that the united national anti-Japanese front was disrupted from within. The instructions of the leadership of the Communist Party of China "to win time and accumulate forces", "to avoid sacrifices in order to preserve forces", which appeared in the second half of 1941, and the temporising policy of this leadership, evidently, did not encourage the struggle against the aggressors.

The Japanese militarists used the passiveness of the Chinese troops for preparing the Chinese springboard for a war against the USSR. This springboard served them in good stead in their military operations in the Pacific and in Southeast Asia after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and in the Manchuria Theatre for preparing an invasion of the Soviet Far East.

All these facts should not be ignored.

Some Chinese authors try to belittle the importance of the Soviet victory in the Great Patriotic War. The Soviet people underwent severe trials and conducted a struggle unprecedented in scope and intensity to achieve their great victory under the leadership of Lenin's Party. They defended their socialist Motherland and made the decisive contribution to the liberation of many nations from Nazi enslavement, saving civilisation from annihilation by Nazi barbarians. No one can belittle this feat.

The Soviet people also performed a heroic feat in the armed struggle in the Far East. The USSR's entry into the war against imperialist Japan brought victory closer. An end was put to the Sino-Japanese War. After the Soviet Armed Forces supported by Chinese patriots routed the Kwantung Army, new and favourable conditions emerged for the struggle for the complete and final liberation of China from imperialism and internal reaction, for the victory of the people's revolution.

On July 7, 1941 the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China published a declaration, saying that "the war conducted by the Soviet people is directed not only at defending the USSR but also at defending China and the freedom and independence of all peoples. The victory or defeat of the USSR will be the victory or defeat of China". In December 1949, soon after the triumph of the people's revolution in China, Mao Zedong said: "From the very beginning of the war of resistance no imperialist government rendered us any substantial aid. Only the Soviet Union provided us with personnel, material and financial aid on a large scale."⁴²

While certain Chinese historians try to minimise the historic feat of the Soviet people, especially by falsifying the history of World War II, more accurate evaluations of the final period of the war in the Far East can be found in the Chinese press. Thus, for instance, the article "Victory in the Anti-Japanese War" published in the *Renmin ribao* (July 23, 1983) acknowledges that when the Soviet Union entered the war Japan lost its last opportunity to resist and, thus, finding itself in a hopeless position, was compelled to surrender. The author of the article maintains that the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States could not make Japan cease its resistance. He also notes that the entry into Northeast China of Soviet

troops considerably hastened the end of the anti-Japanese war of the Chinese people.

As we see, there are different approaches to the events of the past war in China. Hence, to meet the special requirements of Chinese society with respect to its recent past, and to collate them with China's present international situation, efforts are being made there to coordinate research. A special scientific society for the study of the history of World War II was founded for this purpose in 1980. By now it has held several conferences and symposia on specific subjects, and has put out close to a dozen books.⁴³ But China's historians have not yet published a capital history of World War II. Judging by the available publications, there is still no consensus on many of the issues, and a common viewpoint is only now being worked out in the course of polemics. At the same time, there are clear signs of a tendency to exaggerate the significance of the China front and to produce an unobjective account of the events on other fronts.

Conclusion

The Allied victory over the Axis powers, with the decisive contribution of the Soviet Union and its Armed Forces, saved mankind from German fascism and Japanese militarism. The rout of Japan's Kwantung Army in Manchuria and North Korea and the liberation by the Soviet army of the Chinese people from the long Japanese occupation created favourable conditions for the national liberation struggle of the Chinese people under the leadership of the Communist Party of China. Thanks to all-round Soviet assistance and the support of progressives all over the world, the Chinese people triumphed over the combined force of US imperialism and the anti-people, rightist Guomindang regime in a civil war (1946-1949), winning power and founding the People's Republic of China. Although the Chinese people, the people's liberation army, the guerillas and the militia fought selflessly against the enemy in the Anti-Japanese war (1937-1945), the forces were unequal. Having entered the war against Japan in the very difficult Manchuria Theatre, the Soviet Union not only pursued its own interests and fulfilled its obligations as an ally, but also did its class and internationalist duty to the Chinese working people and the revolutionaries of China, Korea and Indochina and carried out its liberating mission in the East.¹ The defeat of the Kwantung Army, that buttress of Japanese militarism and aggression in Manchuria and North Korea, compelled the Japanese government to surrender unconditionally, thus bringing World War II to a victorious end. The Soviet Union played a crucial role in the Chinese people's liberation by defeating the Kwantung Army in Manchuria and North Korea and actually handing over Manchuria, a most important military, strategic and industrial re-

gion, to the revolutionary forces of China.² The Manchurian revolutionary base greatly influenced the political struggle, the course of the civil war and the socio-economic changes that were carried out in Manchuria in the late 1940s with Soviet aid. This important international factor paved the way for the development and consolidation of the revolutionary base in Manchuria and for the successful struggle of the Chinese people for complete liberation from home reaction and imperialist domination.

If not for the Soviet Union's diplomatic activities and its political and military influence, especially during the Communist Party's of China early defeats in the civil war, the victory of the Chinese revolution would have claimed too great a toll. Soviet diplomacy foiled US plans of direct interference in China's internal affairs. The Soviet Union defended the interests of the Chinese people by its activities in the international arena and its direct assistance to the revolutionary forces of China. The withdrawal of Soviet troops from China, too, was effected with an eye to the interests of the liberation struggle. During this complicated period, the USSR effectively used the treaty and agreement of August 14, 1945, as well as its presence in Manchuria, including the Port Arthur naval base and the Chinese Changchun (Eastern) Railway, to the obvious benefit of the Chinese revolution.

After the surrender of Japan, two diametrically opposite courses came into collision in China: the Soviet course of supporting the struggle of the Chinese people for complete national independence, preventing civil war, and embarking on democratic development, and the imperialist course of the United States, that sought to make China dependent on the interests of the US monopolies, and to strengthen the reactionary Guomindang regime. Following Japan's surrender, the United States counted on using China, that would depend on the USA, as a counterweight to the Soviet Union in the Far East. The Soviet Union was, indeed, engaged in a difficult and persistent struggle in the international arena to protect the interests of China, its people and their right to democratic, free and progressive development. In this struggle the Soviet Union had to overcome the resistance of the reactionary forces, primarily those of the United States, which strove to take the place of the defeated Japanese militarists in China. The liberative mission of the So-

viet Union and its Armed Forces in the East and Sino-Soviet friendship and cooperation in the struggle against the common enemy—imperialism—are easily traced at all the stages in the history of the two great nations after the Great October Socialist Revolution and, especially, during the struggle of the Chinese and Soviet peoples against fascism and Japanese militarism.

Postwar events confirm the necessity for vigorous and consistent struggle for peace. Today the paramount task of all the peoples of the world is to uphold peace. No nuclear war, either limited or total, must ever occur. It is in the interests of mankind to stop the warmongers.

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Conclusion

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